5/3/1: The Simplest and Most Effective Training System to Increase Raw Strength

By Jim Wendler

Before you embark on any physical fitness program, please consult a doctor.

This book may not be reproduced or recorded in any form without permission from the author.

Copyright 2009, 2011 by Jim Wendler. All rights reserved.

Table of Contents

The Origin of 5/3/1 – 6

The 5/3/1 Philosophy - 8

5/3/1/ Program - 10

Squat - 12

Military Press - 14

Bench Press - 15

Deadlift - 17

Training Fashion - 19

Beginning the Program - 21

The Last Set - 23

How to Progress – 24

Even Smaller Increments? - 29

Stalling in 5/3/1 - 30

How to Warm Up - 31

Comparing Rep Maxes - 32

Having a Less than Stellar Day - 33

Assistance Exercises – 33

How to Have Stronger Abs - 45

The Great Debate - 45

Boring but Big - 48

Triumvirate - 48

I'm Not Doing Shit Today - 50

Periodization Bible - 50

Bodyweight – 52

Programming Your Assistance Work – Simplest Strength Template – 52

Rest Pause Training - 58

Moving North of Vag - 69

Training 3 Days a Week - 76

Training 2 Days a Week - 77

5/3/1 Full Body Training – 79

5/3/1 and Crossfit - 85

5/3/1 for Beginners - 90

Using Excel – 92

Eating for Size and Strength - 94

5/3/1 FAQ - 99

5/3/1 Comments and Success Stories – 110

10 Training Rules to be Awesome - 118

5/3/1 Percentage Charts - 119

5/3/1 Training Log – 123

Meal Plan Tracker - 131

About the Author - 132

This book is dedicated to Mason.

THE ORIGIN OF 5/3/1

In the summer of 2005, I was burned out from competitive powerlifting. I was tired of bench shirts, box squats, bands and being fat. Two years earlier, I'd written down three goals I wanted to accomplish. In my last meet, I'd done all three. Satisfied with reaching my goals, and dissatisfied with how I felt, I needed a change – but I didn't know exactly what I wanted or how I was going to get there.

My first order of business was losing weight. I was about 280 pounds, and I wanted to be able to tie my shoes without turning red. I wanted to be able to walk down the street without losing my breath. Like many people, I played football in high school and college. I was in shape then, and could do just about anything. Fast forward five years, and I was at the bottom of the food chain. That feeling of being a fat-ass was awful. I was exactly what I despised.

I remember once watching a young woman walk for exercise when I was in college. She wasn't overweight, and she didn't look like she was suffering from any kind of physical ailment. I was mystified as to why this seemingly fit woman was simply walking. Why wasn't she running? Why wasn't she running *with a sled*? Why wasn't she pushing a car, or pushing an SUV up and down the street?

Walking?

I remember thinking to myself that if I ever reached a point in my life where I had to walk to get exercise, it might be time to clean out my ears with a gun.

Fortunately, I didn't follow through with my plans. The point, however, is this: *I was fat and out of shape*. And even though I'd recently squatted 1000 pounds, I really wasn't strong. I couldn't move, and I couldn't use this strength for anything other than waddling up to a monolift and squatting.

A few months later, I'd managed to lose about 25 pounds. Simply walking and not eating as much helped me out immensely. I was able to move again. I could run, sprint, jog, jump rope or do just about anything.

But damn was I weak.

I knew where I wanted to go. I simply wanted to deadlift and squat over 600 pounds again, and I wanted to bench press 405. That was it. And I wanted to do it without the aid of powerlifting gear like bench shirts and squat suits. I also wanted an easy plan to get there. I didn't want to have to do a million different exercises. The bench press, parallel squat, deadlift and standing press have always been staples of any strong person's repertoire, so I knew what exercises I wanted to do.

I needed a plan for all of this. I needed something very simple, and I didn't want to have to think about it. I had recently become a father, and my priorities had changed. I still wanted to be strong, but I didn't want to have to spend all my time thinking about it. I wanted to go in the weight room, have my work planned for me, and get out. No bullshit, no problem.

I'd started playing around with the concept of 5/3/1 months earlier, so I knew I was on to something, but I wasn't sure how it would work. Because my bench, squat and deadlift goals were so straightforward, I gave myself 12 months to accomplish them. I worked backward from these numbers and ended up with beginning weights that were really light. I mean *ridiculously light*.

I had a plan, though, and I followed through. I figured once I finished each month of training, I'd be ready to move on to the next – and the next, and the next, until I finally reached my goal. Of course, this was wishful thinking – it doesn't always work like this – but I needed a simple plan, and this was the best one I could come up with. Or the simplest, at least.

Sometimes, however, the simplest is the best. In my case, this proved to be true. I was breezing through my workouts, putting on some muscle, and having fun again. I began pushing my last set for as many reps as I could, setting personal records in the process.

Training was fun again. Gone were the three hour marathons of bench shirt training and sweating my ass off wearing tight polyester gear. I was in and out of the weight room in 30-45 minutes, and I was still getting stronger. After about three months of training, I got a wild hair up my ass and tried to pull a max deadlift. After my sets were over, I loaded up the bar and pulled for 3 reps what I thought I might be able to pull once. 610 x 3.

Now, this isn't any kind of world – or even personal – record, but it was really, really good for me at the time, especially when you consider the fact that I was used to wearing a deadlift suit and briefs and had lost so much weight. Plus, the deadlift was always my worst lift. I can blame this

on any number of things, but the bottom line is that I just wasn't strong. Now, with this program, I could feel myself inching toward "strong" without having to be a blob of disgusting lard.

I began playing more and more with this program. I switched things up, experimented on friends and training partners and read some old books on training, and this is what I came up with. Hell, it may change even more with time, but the basics will always remain the same.

THE 5/3/1 PHILOSOPHY

The 5/3/1 philosophy is more important than the sets and reps. Whenever I feel like I'm getting sidetracked or want to try something different, I revisit these rules to make sure I'm doing things the right way. Even if you decide this program isn't for you, these basic tenets have stood the test of time. Take these things to heart, and you'll be greatly rewarded.

Emphasize Big, Multi-Joint Movements

This really isn't any secret. Beginners have been told to do this for years, and advanced lifters swear by these movements. Multi-joint lifts are lifts that involve more than one muscle – i.e., not an isolation exercise like leg extensions – and allow you to build the most muscle. These lifts are the most efficient for building muscle and strength. Examples are the squat, deadlift, bench press and power clean.

Start Too Light

My coaches emphasized this to me when I was in high school, but unfortunately, I didn't listen. Hopefully you will. Starting too light allows for more time for you to progress forward. It's easy for anyone – beginner or advanced – to want to get ahead of themselves. Your lifts will go up for a few months, but then they'll stall – and stall, and stall some more. Lifters get frustrated and don't understand that the way around this is to prolong the time it takes to get to the goal. You have to keep inching forward. This is a very hard pill to swallow for most lifters. They want to start heavy, and they want to start now. This is nothing more than ego, and nothing will destroy a lifter faster, or for longer, than ego.

Progress Slowly

This goes hand in hand with starting light. Slow progress might not get you the best rewards today, but it will tomorrow. The longer you can progress, even if it's by one rep or 2.5 pounds, the more it means that you're actually *making* progress. People always scoff when I want their bench to go up by 20-25 pounds their first year. They want the program that will put 40 pounds on their bench in 8 weeks. When they say this, I ask them how much their bench went up in the last year, and they hang their heads in shame. I can't understand why someone wouldn't want progress – even it's just 5 pounds. It's better than nothing. It's progress.

The game of lifting isn't an 8-week pursuit. It doesn't last as long as your latest program does. Rather, it's a lifetime pursuit. If you understand this, then progressing slowly isn't a big deal. In fact, this can be a huge weight lifted off your back. Now you can focus on getting those 5 extra pounds rather than 50.

It's always been one of my goals to standing press 300 pounds. In the summer of 2008, I did just that. When someone asked me what my next goal was, my response was simple: "305 pounds." If you bench press 225 pounds and want to get 275, you have to bench 230 first.

Break Personal Records (PR's)

This is where the fun of this – and any – program begins and ends. This program allows you to break a wide variety of rep records throughout the entire year. Most people live and die by their

1-rep max. To me, this is foolish and shortsighted. If your squat goes from 225x6 to 225x9, you've gotten stronger. If you keep setting and breaking rep records, you'll get stronger. Don't get stuck just trying to increase your one rep max. If you keep breaking your rep records, it'll go up. There's also a simple way of comparing rep maxes that I'll explain later.

Breaking personal records is a great motivator, and it's also a great way to add some excitement into your training. When you do this, the sets and reps carry much more meaning. There's something on the line. You'll have greater focus and purpose in your training. You'll no longer have to just do a set of 5 reps. You'll focus on beating the number and beating the weight.

All of the above concerns are addressed in this program. Even if you don't follow this particular program, I believe these things should be emphasized no matter what you're doing or why you're training.

The 5/3/1 Program

This is a very easy program to work with. The following is a general outline of the training I suggest. I'll go into detail on each point in the chapters to follow.

- You will train 2-4 days per week (this will be up to you).
- One day will be devoted to the standing military press, one day to the parallel squat, one day to the deadlift and one day to the bench press.
- Each training cycle lasts 4-6 weeks. This depends on how many days a week you train.
- The first week you will do 3 sets of 5 reps (3x5).
- The second week you will do 3 sets of 3 reps (3x3).
- The third week you will do 1 set of 5 reps, 1 set of 3 reps and 1 set of 1 rep (5/3/1).
- The fourth week you will do 3 sets of 5 reps (3x5). This is an easy deload week.
- After the fourth week, you begin again with 3 sets of 5 reps.
- Each week and each set has a percentage to follow, so you won't be guessing what to do anymore.

As you can see, there's nothing fancy to this program. I believe in big compound lifts, keeping the set and rep schemes simple, and deloading every fourth week. These concepts are nothing new, and I admit that. The beauty of this program, however, is how you begin. If you begin correctly, you'll end correctly. Here's what the basic week looks like:

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
Warm-up	Warm-up	Warm-up	Warm-up
Standing Military Press	Deadlift	Bench Press	Squat
Assistance Exercises	Assistance Exercises	Assistance Exercises	Assistance Exercises

Possible Training Days:

- Monday/Tuesday/Thursday/Friday
- Sunday/Monday/Wednesday/Friday
- Sunday/Monday/Wednesday/Thursday

You can train on any days you'd like, obviously, and there are many possibilities. Just be sure to give yourself appropriate rest between training days. If you don't know what "appropriate rest" is, ask yourself this question:

Did I get enough rest after my last session to have an optimal training session today?

The Squat

We've heard the refrain a thousand times before that the squat is the "King of All Exercises." This gets redundant after a while, but there are myriad reasons why it's stayed on top for so long. The squat really does reign supreme. With that said, here are some helpful hints on squatting:

- Your eyes should be focused. Some people believe you should look straight up when you squat. These people aren't good to listen to. Your eyes should be directed straight ahead or just slightly downward. Don't take your eyes off the point you choose. Pick something, and stare at it intently. Even if there's movement and distractions around this point, they shouldn't stop your stare. This is how focused you have to be.

- Proper bar placement depends on your body type and what's most comfortable to you. Some people have shoulder problems and can't carry the bar very low. Others just plain suck at high bar squatting. Place the bar where it allows you to reach depth with good form. It's just that easy.

- I like taking a full grip on the bar, but I used a "thumbs-around" grip for the first half of my squatting life. I don't see this as a deal-breaker.

- Keep your elbows down and try to force them under the bar. This will cause your hips to drive first out of the bottom of the squat. It'll also keep your chest high and prevent you from squatting with your legs first instead of your back. The first thing to shoot up with many people is their ass. Remedy this by pushing with your hips and keeping your elbows under the bar – or at least trying to.

- Descend until the tops of your thighs are parallel to the ground. Go deeper if you'd like, but this is the minimum depth you should shoot for.

- When you begin your descent, push your knees out to the sides and your glutes back.

- Arch your upper back hard for the entire lift. This will cause your lower back to arch, too.

- Grip the bar with the narrowest grip you can manage without hurting your shoulders. This will ensure that you remain tight throughout the lift.

- Once you hit parallel, drive your elbows under the bar and explode up.

- Before you take the bar out of the rack, fill your diaphragm with air, place the bar on your back, then confidently push it out of the rack with your back and legs. Don't "wimp" the bar out. I like to do this with a large breath, which I won't let out until I'm in my stance.

- Any more than two or three steps back is a waste of time and energy. Be efficient. I mentally count, "One, Two" when taking the bar out to make sure that I take only two steps out of the rack.

- Squeeze the bar hard during the lift. This will keep your entire body tight.

- Before the descent, take another breath and go. Keep this air in until you're about 2/3 of the way back up. Then you can let it out. I've taught myself to hold my breath for 3 reps, but this is very difficult and I wouldn't recommend it for everyone.
- Bouncing out of the bottom position (the "hole") is not a bad thing. Losing your air and tightness when you do so is. Don't do that.
- Your descent should be slow enough to permit you to maintain good form, but it should be fast enough to not waste energy or kill the stretch reflex at the bottom. Many lifters will "dive bomb" their squats. This is a fancy term for dropping very quickly and almost catching the bar in the bottom position before squatting back up. This is okay for advanced lifters who know their bodies and have great technique, but it's probably unacceptable for about 99% of the rest of the population.
- Your toes should be pointed out at about a 30-45 degree angle. This will allow your knees to track correctly.

The Press

- Most lifters like taking a grip just outside the shoulders. I grip about an inch and a half outside the knurling of a power bar – which puts my grip about thumb's length from the smooth part of the bar. This will ensure shoulder safety and stability.
- I always use a false grip where my thumbs aren't wrapped around the bar. This is personal preference, but it seems like the bar path tracks better overhead when I do this. This grip can be dangerous, however, so use caution.
- I begin the press by lifting my chin up, and I try to just miss it when the bar goes up. I don't want the bar bowing out any more than it has to.
- As the bar is pressed overhead, bring your head and chest through. Don't push the bar back.
- Bring the bar back down in the same motion.
- Each rep should start with the bar on your shoulders. Don't perform half reps. Your body was designed to move through a full range of motion, so do it.

- Keep your lower back arched and your chest up throughout the entire lift.
- The positioning of your feet is determined by your comfort level. I take a narrow (less than shoulder width) stance, but this isn't a requirement.
- You don't use leg drive to push the bar overhead, but try to keep your legs strong and taut through the entire movement.

The Bench Press

- Your shoulder blades must be pushed back, and your chest must be spread throughout the bench press. If you're benching without the aid of a bench shirt, most of the bar weight (and your bodyweight) should be supported by your upper back. This will help keep the bar from touching too low. It will ensure that you don't lose your tightness, and that you'll be pressing from a strong bottom position.

- Your lower back should be arched and kept that way. This does *not* mean you lift your butt off the bench.

- Again, do NOT lift your butt off the bench. This bears repeating.

- Foot placement is up to you, but make sure they're in a solid and strong position. I like to place my feet back slightly toward the head of the bench, and I assume a stance that's narrow enough to allow my legs to squeeze the bench. As I press up, I drive my heels into the ground and squeeze my legs, picturing all the energy from my legs and hips driving into the bar. This is "leg drive." Think about squatting the weight up.

- Grip width is also up to you. Over the years, I've found that a narrow grip is a little healthier in the long run than a wider grip. My grip is around 18" between index fingers. This may limit my weights in the short term, but it'll ensure that I won't have any pec or shoulder problems in the long run. It's better to press today *and* tomorrow than just to press today.

- As soon as the bar is in your hands, make sure your lower and upper back are arched, your feet are firmly on the floor, and your hands are wrapped tightly around the bar.

- I like to take a large breath and force it into my diaphragm before lifting the bar off. This helps me feel stronger and more stable when I get the bar. A strong and easy lift-off is a great way to improve your lift and your mental state. Again, don't "wimp" the bar off the rack.

- Don't use a lift-off partner when you train. Use this only for maximal attempts.

- I usually hold my breath for the first 2-3 reps of every set. This is hard to do, but it ensures good technique and you won't lose tightness.

- If you're using a closer grip like I do, the bar will touch higher on the body than it will with a wider grip – usually hitting just below my nipples. If you use a wider grip, the bar will hit slightly lower.

- Because you'll be hitting higher on the chest with a closer grip, the bar will travel only slightly back toward your face. This is because you've already started the press closer to your head than you would have with a wider grip.

- With a wider grip, this path will be more pronounced because you're hitting your chest lower. This will trace a "C" motion.
- Keep your elbows tucked on the way down. This doesn't mean they should be tucked into your sides. A slight tuck will suffice. If you tuck too hard, you'll lose power off the bottom of the lift. This is where most people get stuck.
- Once you touch your chest, keep your elbows tucked and drive the bar back slightly. About halfway up, allow your elbows to flare out, and keep pushing up and back.

The Deadlift

- To figure out the best stance for your deadlift, pretend you're about to perform a vertical jump. Get your feet and body into position. Now, look down and move your feet in

slightly. This is your starting position. This varies from lifter to lifter, but I've found this to be an optimal starting point.

- Your toes should be pointed slightly outward.
- Don't deadlift with your weight on the balls of your feet. This is an injury waiting to happen. Your weight should be on the middle of your foot or toward the rear.
- Start with the bar just in front of your shins, but not touching them. Once you reach down and grab the bar, your shins will meet it.
- Your upper back should be pulled together with your shoulders over the bar.
- Your lower back should be arched or held static in whatever position you're in. I don't deadlift with a perfectly arched back, but it's not rounded either, and it won't round during the lift.
- Your hands should be placed just outside your feet – wide enough to allow you to get your hips through at the top of the lift. You'll have to experiment with this.
- Most people deadlift with a mixed grip. One hand is supinated (like you're doing curls), and the other is pronated (palm facing toward you). Using a double overhand grip (both hands pronated) is fine, but using straps is not. Choosing which hand to supinate is a matter of personal preference.
- Before lifting the bar, fill your diaphragm (not your chest) with air.
- Begin the ascent by easing pressure into the bar. *Do not jerk the bar off the ground*. This is how you tear a bicep or hurt your back. The best way to do this is to squeeze the bar hard with your hands and squeeze your butt.
- I try to keep my eyes focused on a point on the ground about 15 feet in front of me.
- Before the bar is lifted, I always think, "Butt down, chest up."
- The first movement of the deadlift should be initiated with the legs, not the back. This is why it's imperative to have strong quads to deadlift.

- Once the bar begins moving up your shins, start pulling back and onto your heels. Don't let the bar come out in front of you. Keep it close to your body at all times. It should touch your thighs on the way up.

- Once the bar passes your knees, push your hips through to complete the lift. At this point you should be standing erect (not back), and your knees should be locked.

- You can either lower the bar slowly to the starting position or drop it. This depends on how quickly you want to get yourself kicked out of a public gym.

- There are two options for doing multiple reps with the deadlift. You can either *touch-and-go* the reps (slight bounce off the floor), or you can do *dead stop* deadlifts. For these, you'll reset for each rep. I've done both, and both work. The downside to touch-and-go is that when you build up momentum, you can bounce too hard and lose your tightness. If you're strong enough to hold your position and you have the control to do it, this option will work for you. The dead stop option is good for most people, but make sure you reset perfectly each time. The beginning portion of the lift is where most back injuries will occur. In this regard, the touch-and-go style is a little safer.

Training Fashion

I'm not talking about the shirts, shorts or socks you wear, although from what I've seen in gyms, maybe I should. Should you wear knee wraps, wrist wraps and belts when you train? To answer this question, here's a list of things I think can be useful in your training program:

Belt: This is the telltale sign that you're a lifter, as least as far as the general public is concerned. The general public, however, should never see this because you should never wear it in public. If you're in a gym, people already know you're a lifter. If you actually have some muscle mass, that might be a dead giveaway, too. Some anti-belt lobbyists believe your abs and lower back will get weaker if you use a belt, but if you train these areas you'll be fine.

There are generally two kinds of lifting belts. Both are made from either leather or suede. One is a 2" wide Olympic lifting belt, and the other is a 4" wide powerlifting belt. Both are fine. The

type you'll use is going to be up to you and your comfort level. Many people like squatting in the wider power belt, while deadlifting and bench pressing in the Olympic belt.

Don't buy a cheap belt. A good belt will last you a lifetime, and once you have it broken in, you'll consider it the best training partner you've ever had. I recommend wearing a belt for your work sets in this program, but if you need to wear it during your warm-ups, that's fine too.

Shoes: A good pair of shoes is essential, especially for squatting and deadlifting. I own two pairs of shoes for squatting: a Metal squat shoe and an Olympic squatting shoe. The Metal squat shoe has a hard sole, but it's flat. The Olympic shoe has a raised heel. I like them both, and I haven't found much difference between the two. The heels are different in these shoes, but the soles are the same – they're hard. They're not soft like a running shoe or a cross trainer – two of the worst shoes in which to squat or deadlift.

I'd rather squat or pull barefoot than in a "regular" shoe, and I've done this in a pinch. The cushion of these shoes allows too much foot movement, and it doesn't give your legs a strong, steady base to pull or push from. Picture squatting on a bed versus doing it on a concrete floor.

I'm not sure whether Metal makes their shoes anymore, but you can find good Olympic shoes on the internet. I have a pair made by Adidas. They're expensive, but you'll have them for life so don't skimp.

The second option is a shoe like a Chuck Taylor. The sole is cushioned but very thin and flat. This is probably the cheapest and easiest option for most lifters.

Chalk: Use it. If your gym doesn't allow it, sneak it in. This is one of the most important things for your strength and safety, so be wary of gyms that don't allow it. They don't want you to be safe or strong.

Wraps: I like using wrist wraps (not straps) for bench pressing and military pressing. I use a 24" wrist wrap, applied fairly tight to give my wrists some support. Knee wraps are a good idea, but only when working to a true 1RM. Leave them off otherwise. Knee sleeves can be worn if you feel they offer enough warmth to the area and allow you to squat without pain.

Beginning the Program

First, know your maxes for the four lifts (squat, bench, deadlift and standing military press). These are not maxes you think you can do, maxes you've done, or maxes you think you might be able to do. These are maxes you can do RIGHT NOW. This is not the time to be a braggart lifter. If you overestimate your maxes, you'll be in for a rude awakening.

If you don't know your maxes for any of the lifts, you can take a few days and see where you're at, or you can take a rep max. This is a good way to get an idea of your strength without loading the bar for a maximal attempt. Here's how to do it:

- Estimate your 1RM for the lift. If you can't even do this, you probably shouldn't be doing this program.
- Take 80% or 85% of your supposed max and perform as many reps as possible.
- Plug the reps and the weight into this formula to get your estimated 1RM:

Weight x Reps x .0333 + Weight = Estimated 1RM

Once you have your maxes for each lift (bench, squat, deadlift and standing military press), I want you to take 90% of this number and use this as your "max" for the first 4 weeks of the training cycle. The easiest way to do this is to take your max and multiply it by .9 (that's "point" 9). For example, let's say you have a 400 deadlift, 385 squat, 190 military press, and a 295 bench press. Your numbers would look like this:

- **Deadlift:** 400 x .9 = 360
- **Squat:** 385 x .9 = 345

- **Military:** 190 x .9 = 170
- **Bench Press**: 295 x .9 = 265

You would then begin the 5/3/1 program using the above numbers (360, 345, 170, 265) as your starting “maxes.”

This will allow you to use sub-maximal weights to get stronger, and since you won’t be handling heavy weights all the time, it’ll keep your body fresh and you won’t plateau or regress. If you decide you don’t want to do this, don’t do this program. I’ve gotten a lot of questions about why this must be done, and the answer is simple: by starting out at 10% less than your max, you won’t burn out, and you won’t plateau. So, leave your ego at the door and do it correctly. You don’t need to operate at your real max to make gains with this program. Here are some examples:

- Monte Sparkman – benched 440 at a meet using a 405 training max.
- Jim Wendler – deadlifted 710 using nothing higher than a 650 training max.
- Leigh An Jaskiewicz – benched 135x10 and 175x1 using nothing higher than a 140 training max.
- Phil Wylie – deadlifted 677 at a meet with a highest training pull of 550x9.

These are extreme examples, but the point is this: you don’t have to train maximally to get strong. You just have to train optimally. This is the greatest lesson I learned from Louie Simmons. So, the first part of this program entails finding your maxes for the squat, bench, deadlift and standing military press. *Once you have these maxes, make the commitment to starting your training program at 90% of your max.*

There are two options you can use with the 5/3/1 method. The sets and reps are the same. Only the percentages differ. Here is option one:

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
65% x 5 reps	70% x 3 reps	75% x 5 reps	40% x 5 reps
75% x 5 reps	80% x 3 reps	85% x 3 reps	50% x 5 reps
85% x 5 or more reps	90% x 3 or more reps	95% x 1 or more reps	60% x 5 reps

Here is option two:

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
75% x 5 reps	80% x 3 reps	75% x 5 reps	40% x 5 reps
80% x 5 reps	85% x 3 reps	85% x 3 reps	50% x 5 reps
85% x 5 or more reps	90% x 3 or more reps	95% x 1 or more reps	60% x 5 reps

I've used both options, and both have worked very well for me. Right now, I use option one exclusively and would recommend this for just about everyone. Most people prefer doing it this way because it allows you to be fresher for the last big set of the day. The second option is very tiring, especially on squat and deadlift days.

Which one is right for you? I don't know. Both are effective simply because there's a logical progression involved, and a logical thought process behind each. You can also mix and match them. Whatever the case may be, pick one and try it out. If you do it correctly, you'll make gains.

The Last Set

Whichever option you choose, you'll notice that the last set of the day reads, "or more reps." This is where the fun begins. The last set of the day is the all-out set. You'll be going for as many reps as possible. I hesitate to tell anyone to do anything to failure, because that's not what

I'm after. I wouldn't prescribe this. This last set should be a ball buster, though, and it's the one you really need to focus on. This is when you dig in and try to move the world.

Because you're working off a weight that's 10% less than your actual max, you should be able to get the prescribed reps for the day fairly easily. This is a foregone conclusion. On the last set, however, you'll have to reach further and grind it out – not to failure so you're dead and can't train the rest of the week, but it should take some life out of you.

I highly recommend having a goal in mind for these last sets. Sit down the night before, or the week before, and think of the number of reps you'd like to hit. See yourself doing it. Write it down and visualize the bar in your hands or on your back. When it's time, let yourself go and attack the weight.

I've always thought of doing the prescribed reps as simply testing your strength. Anything over and above that builds strength, muscle and character. Doing the prescribed reps shows you and your body that you're strong enough for the workout. The extra reps are your way of dominating the workout and getting better.

One word of warning, however: don't take the lighter sets for granted. These will set you up mentally for the big sets. If these sets are light and explosive, you'll feel confident and strong for your last set. If you take these lightly, or you take a carefree attitude toward them, your mind will not be right for the last set.

As you progress through this program, the weights will increase and getting more reps will get harder. If you progress slowly and start too light, you'll continue to make progress over a longer period of time, and the last set will continue to be a motivating factor.

Important note: in the 4th week (your deload week), you should NOT be going for max reps. This is a week to get some light work in and prime yourself for the next month of training.

How to Progress

Because I believe in starting too light and progressing slowly, this program has a very easy system for progressing from month to month. Remember, the first four weeks will start with a "max" that's 10% less than your actual max. I've even had lifters use 15% less than their actual max and get great results. Also, you should make sure this number is based on a training max,

not a competition max. To demonstrate, let's take a hypothetical lifter whose actual maxes are as follows:

- **Squat:** 315
- **Bench:** 250
- **Military:** 170
- **Deadlift:** 350

The first four weeks will look something like this:

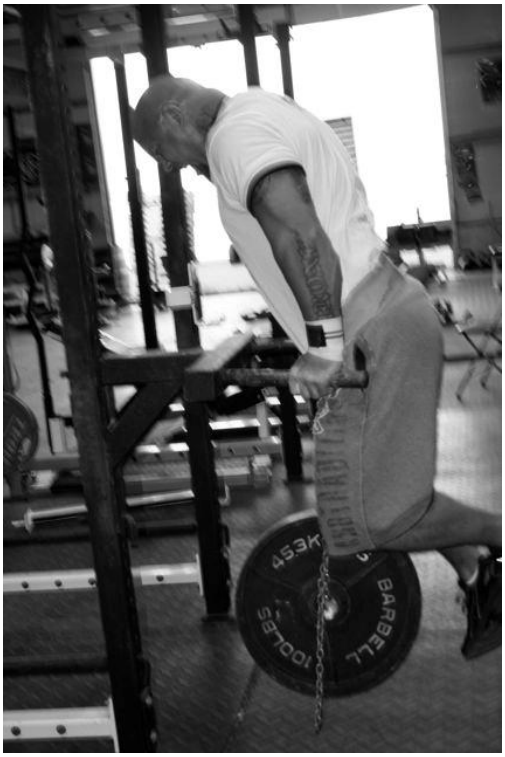


Figure 1: 200lbs Weighted Dips

Week I		Week II		Week III		Week IV	
Military		**Military**		**Military**		**Military**	
150							
Reps	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*
5	100	3	105	5	115	5	75
5	115	3	120	3	130	5	90
5	130	3	135	1	145	5	105
Deadlift		**Deadlift**		**Deadlift**		**Deadlift**	
325							
Reps	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*
5	215	3	230	5	245	5	165
5	245	3	260	3	280	5	195
5	280	3	295	1	310	5	230
Bench		**Bench**		**Bench**		**Bench**	
225							
Reps	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*
5	150	3	160	5	170	5	115
5	170	3	180	3	195	5	135
5	195	3	205	1	215	5	160
Squat		**Squat**		**Squat**		**Squat**	
285							
Reps	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*
5	190	3	200	5	215	5	145
5	215	3	230	3	245	5	175
5	245	3	260	1	275	5	200

In the far left column, you'll notice that each lift has a corresponding max next to it. This number represents 10% less than what this lifter can actually do in the gym. The first four weeks of this cycle can be difficult to adjust to because many lifters are used to maxing out all the time. They stay at the same weight for months, and they don't make any progress. Then, when they're asked to lighten the load, they'll throw their hands up in disgust and say, "I can't get strong like that!"

I really don't know what the problem is here, because they're not getting strong anyway. This can also be difficult for the lifter who's used to doing singles all the time. This program requires that you push yourself on the last set. This often entails performing 10 or more reps.

Again, remember that during deload weeks, you'll only be doing the reps listed. Don't go for max reps during these sessions.

Let's take a look at what a sample week would look like for the above lifter:

Monday

- *Military Press:* 100 for 5 reps, 115 for 5 reps and 130 for 10 reps. Notice that this last set is done for as many reps as possible. The lifter will keep track of the weight and the reps on the last set.
- *Dips:* 5 sets of 10 reps
- *Dumbbell Rows:* 3 sets of 12 reps
- *Shrugs:* 3 sets of 15 reps

Tuesday

- *Deadlift:* 215 for 5 reps, 245 for 5 reps, 280 for 12 reps
- *Lunges:* 3 sets of 6 reps per leg
- *Hanging Ab Raises:* 3 sets of 15 reps

Thursday

- *Bench Press:* 150 for 5 reps, 170 for 5 reps, 195 for 11 reps

Lifter had to get in and out of the weight room on this day because of work commitments, so he didn't perform any assistance work. This is fine because he accomplished exactly what he needed to do today. He also established a very good rep max to use as a future benchmark.

Friday

- *Squat:* 190 for 5 reps, 215 for 5 reps, 245 for 9 reps
- *Leg Press:* 5 sets of 20
- *Leg Curls:* 3 sets of 10

The first four weeks are also a great way to establish some personal records. Make sure you keep track of these and try to break them.

In the second four week phase, the lifter will increase his maxes no more than 5 pounds per upper body lift, and 10 pounds for lower body lifts. These increases are to the max that you're basing your percentages on. You're NOT increasing the weight for each set. The next four weeks will look something like this:

Week I		**Week II**		**Week III**		**Week IV**	
Military		**Military**		**Military**		**Military**	
155							
Reps	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*
5	105	3	110	5	120	5	80
5	120	3	125	3	135	5	95
5	135	3	140	1	150	5	110
Deadlift		**Deadlift**		**Deadlift**		**Deadlift**	
335							
Reps	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*
5	220	3	235	5	255	5	170
5	255	3	270	3	285	5	205
5	285	3	305	1	320	5	235
Bench		**Bench**		**Bench**		**Bench**	
230							
Reps	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*
5	150	3	165	5	175	5	115
5	175	3	185	3	200	5	140
5	200	3	210	1	220	5	165
Squat		**Squat**		**Squat**		**Squat**	
295							
Reps	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*
5	195	3	210	5	225	5	150
5	225	3	240	3	255	5	180
5	255	3	270	1	285	5	210

Even Smaller Increments?

I've been asked several times whether even smaller increases than this would be desirable in terms of increasing the max. A 5 pound increase in the lower body lifts, for example, or a 2.5 pound increase for the bench and military press. I haven't done this, but I'd assume it would work well, provided you have access to 1.25 pound plates for your upper body movements. If you'd like to do this, by all means have at it.

Keep in mind that you're always trying to hit more reps on your last set of each workout. The following month, you'll follow a similar progression – 5 pounds more for your upper body maxes, and 10 more pounds for your lower body maxes.

Week I		**Week II**		**Week III**		**Week IV**	
Military		**Military**		**Military**		**Military**	
160							
Reps	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*
5	105	3	115	5	120	5	80
5	120	3	130	3	140	5	100
5	140	3	145	1	155	5	115
Deadlift		**Deadlift**		**Deadlift**		**Deadlift**	
345							
Reps	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*
5	225	3	245	5	260	5	175
5	260	3	280	3	295	5	210
5	295	3	315	1	330	5	245
Bench		**Bench**		**Bench**		**Bench**	
235							
Reps	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*
5	155	3	165	5	180	5	120
5	180	3	190	3	200	5	145
5	200	3	215	1	225	5	165
Squat		**Squat**		**Squat**		**Squat**	
305							
Reps	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*
5	200	3	215	5	230	5	155
5	230	3	245	3	260	5	185
5	260	3	275	1	290	5	215

Pretty simple, right? These are small, steady progressions over time that will lead to big gains, and that's what lifting is all about. You keep on increasing the max you're working from every four weeks until you can no longer hit the prescribed sets and reps.

Stalling in 5/3/1

You'll eventually come to a point where you can't make any more progress on a lift. You won't be able to hit the sets and reps you're supposed to hit, and the weights will start to get too heavy. When this happens, I simply take 90% of my max (either a 1RM or a rep max) and start all over again.

For example, let's say I did 205x4 on my military press when I first started the program. Using the rep-max calculator, my estimated max would be 230 pounds. Since I started with 10% less, my beginning max would be 210. Over the course of six months, I worked up to a rep max of

185x10. This puts my estimated max at 245. Now, I'll take 10% of 245 (220), and begin to work my way up again. This is a matter of taking three steps forward and one step back.

You may stall out with one lift before you do with the others. When this happens, you only need to decrease the one stalled lift. If you're stalling out on multiple lifts, and you feel like everything is catching up with you, take a deload week and recalculate your maxes.

If you're really starting out with 10% less than your actual maxes, you can expect to go through 5-7 cycles at a minimum before you stall out. I've gone through 8 before having to back off.

How to Warm-up

Warming up prior to training is important. I usually recommend the following:

- 1x5 @ 40%
- 1x5 @ 50%
- 1x3 @ 60%
- Work sets

The purpose of a warm-up is to prepare yourself for a great day of work sets – not an average one. You really shouldn't need too many warm-up sets to prepare yourself for your work sets. For a more detailed full body warm-up, see the "Moving North of Vag" section later in this book.

Comparing Rep Maxes

How do you compare your 6-rep max to your 3-rep max? How do you know which one is better? Is your new 8-rep max better than your 2-rep max? I've used the following rep formula since high school. It's allowed me to assess where I am and see how my training has progressed without always having to take a true 1RM. This formula is not necessarily an accurate predictor of your 1RM, but it affords you a good general way to gauge your progress. Here it is:

Weight x Reps x .0333 + Weight = Estimated 1RM

The only constant in this formula is .0333. All the other numbers will be determined by your performance. We can try a comparison to illustrate this. Let's say you deadlifted 550x9 in one workout, and in another, you managed 580x5.

550 x 9 x .0333 + 550 = 715

580 x 5 x .0333 + 580 = 675

From this, we can see that the 550x9 is a stronger rep max than the 580x5. This is best used for motivation, and for a way to mentally prepare for your workouts. Let's say you bench pressed 255x8 in your last workout. The following week, your last prescribed set is 270x3, but you want to beat last week's performance. How do you do this? First, you need to figure out what your perceived max is for 255x8.

255 x 8 x .0333 + 255 = 322

You want to beat this max, so the next thing to do is find out how many reps, according to the formula, this will take with 270.

270 x 6 x .0333 + 270 = 323

This isn't a huge increase, but it's an increase, and that's the most important thing to remember. It's going to take a couple of runs through to figure out what reps you're going to need, but this

will force you to really push on your last set. It'll give you focus throughout your day and in your training.

Having a Less than Stellar Day

You're not always going to have great training days. Life is filled with distractions, and you're going to get stressed out. Combine that with a bad night's sleep or a lack of food, and you're looking at a lot of things that can potentially go wrong. The bottom line here is that you're not going to have great days all the time.

When this happens, I recommend going into the weight room with one purpose: getting your prescribed weights and leaving. The weights may feel heavy, but every part of this program is designed to build onto every other part – from one workout to the next, and one wave to the next. This week of 3x5 will earn you the right to move on to the next 3x5 week of the next wave.

Assistance Exercises

Assistance exercises accomplish four main tasks. In no particular order, they:

- Strengthen weak areas of the body.
- Compliment and help increase the four basic lifts.
- Provide balance and symmetry to your body and your training.
- Build muscle mass.

The biggest problem I've seen with this is people doing way too much. They do too many sets, or too many exercises. These lifts should compliment the training, not detract from it. People choose exercises for every body part, train them excessively, then wonder why they're overtrained and not making any progress. When you're choosing your assistance exercises, do yourself a favor and justify why you're doing them. Don't bullshit yourself. You must have a very strong reason for doing an exercise. If you don't, scrap it and move on. Sometimes, instead of what you do in the weight room, it's what you *don't* do that will lead to success.

You must keep *training economy* in mind. Training economy means getting the best bang for your buck from each exercise. That's why squats are always better than leg extensions. There

are no right and wrong exercises, per se, but here's a small list of the movements I feel are best. Please note that this is *my* list, but you can certainly feel free to copy it. All of these exercises have helped me grow stronger in my four main lifts.

Dips

Figure 2: Bodyweight Dips

Dips are one of the most efficient ways to build your triceps, chest and shoulders. Many people can't do them due to shoulder problems, but I'm not one of them, and that makes me very happy. Since incorporating these into my own training, my entire upper body has gotten bigger and my triceps are much stronger, as well.

I do recommend weighted dips, but not at the expense of form. I'd rather do full range bodyweight dips than half-range weighted dips. The sets and reps on this exercise are dependent on your relative strength, so it's hard to give recommendations, but since you're going to ask:

- 50 total reps for weighted dips.
- 100 total reps if you're just using your bodyweight.

These numbers are just recommendations, so you can do more or less depending on your strength level. If you're ever at a loss for what to do on upper body day, do dips. Lots of them.

Chins

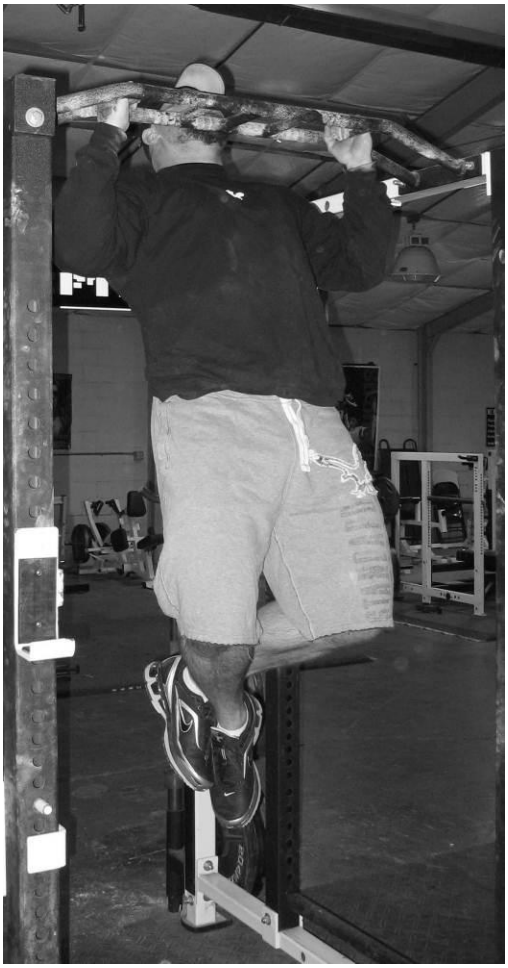


Figure 3: Vary your grip for every set.

Chin-ups, pull-ups, whatever. It doesn't matter to me. Just bring yourself up to a bar and back down again. Your grip should vary: wide, medium, close, overhand, underhand, neutral. Use ropes and towels for chins to build back and grip strength.

Chins are one of the best upper back, lat and biceps exercises you can do. If you want to build your strength in these but can't do a lot of them, try doing low reps (2-5) and multiple sets (10-20). Do this two or three times a week. They're great to do between sets of bench and military (and squat and deadlift!) – you can do them in between any pushing exercise. You can also add weight. As far as reps go, do no less than 100 per week.

If you can't do chins, use a Jump Stretch band to assist you. I recommend the Average Band.

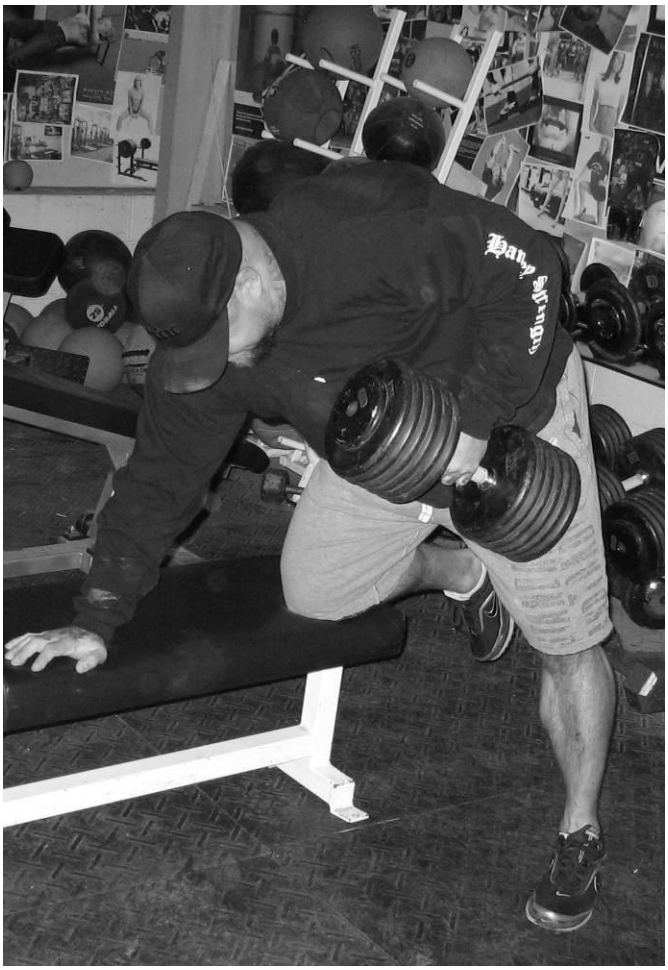
Pushups

Though not as manly as the dip, the pushup still has its place in training. One drawback, however, is that pushups are hard to load. Wearing a weight vest is probably the easiest solution to this problem.

If you don't have a weight vest – and most of you probably don't – there are a few options you can try. First, simply do a ton of reps. Next, use rings (or EFS Blast Straps) to make the movement more difficult. You can also use chains or bands across your back to add resistance.

Blast Strap pushups (with bands) were a staple in my bench routine when I first began powerlifting. This really helped strengthen my chest and shoulders, which in turn helped the bottom of my press.

Dumbbell Rows



This is one of the best ways to build upper back and lat strength. Kroc Rows – high reps (20-40) with the heaviest dumbbell you can handle – are my favorite variation. These are humbling when you first try them, but your grip and back strength will quickly increase. Start off with 1-2 warm-up sets of 10 reps, then go all-out and see what you can do. This exercise is great for the bench press and the deadlift, and it helped my grip strength tremendously.

Barbell Rows

I like the dumbbell version better because it takes some of the back strain out of the movement, but there's no denying the awesomeness of the barbell row. There are a lot of variations here, and some of them are pretty awful. The key to doing these properly – and the same holds true for any other exercise – is to figure out what you want to accomplish with the exercise. Then, you perform it in a way that accomplishes this goal.

For example, some lifters squat because they want to move the heaviest weight possible in a full range of motion (powerlifting). With squatting, for example, you improve your leverages, take an advantageous stance, descend quickly, etc. By contrast, some people squat to improve their quad mass. This lifter will squat differently.

The point here is to ask yourself why you're doing this. Are you doing barbell rows to improve upper back and lat strength? Or are you doing them to improve your barbell row? One (the former) is based on muscles, and the other (the latter) builds a movement.

Answer this question and you will never wonder how to do a barbell row again. Like the dumbbell row, the barbell row is great for the bench press and the deadlift.

Barbell Shrugs

First things first: don't be the guy who rolls his shoulders from front to back when shrugging. This is a sign of a low IQ. As with the dumbbell row, I like doing these for high reps with as heavy a weight as possible. Shrugs are great for building trap size and grip strength – two things most people suck at. After one or two warm-up sets, do an all-out set of 20-40 reps.

Dumbbell Bench

I think I've been asked 6,000 times what kind of elbow tuck to use when performing the dumbbell bench. Palms facing? Elbows out to increase chest involvement? Something in the middle with just a slight elbow tuck?

My first response is, "It's a goddamn dumbbell bench! Who cares!" My second response is to tell them to take the third option of a slight elbow tuck. If they want to argue with me past this, they've got problems.

The dumbbell bench is a great assistance exercise to strengthen the upper body pressing muscles and work each arm independently. It's also great for the regular barbell bench press. I'm often asked if the dumbbell bench can be used as a core exercise (to replace barbell benching or military), and the answer is no. If you want to know why, you obviously haven't been lifting weights very long.

Dumbbell Military

Bring the dumbbells up to your shoulders. With your elbows slightly in, press them overhead. You can press both arms at the same time, alternate, or do one dumbbell at a time. The point is simply to press the dumbbell overhead. Dumbbells offer the advantage of working each arm independently. This can show a muscle imbalance. I've also noticed that it sometimes shows a coordination weakness, too.

Dumbbell Incline

Talking about dumbbell pressing is getting boring, so I'll ask the million dollar question about dumbbell incline presses: at what angle should you press? 30, 45, or 60 degrees? People will argue this ad infinitum, but the correct angle is whatever incline bench you have at your gym. If you have several different ones, use them all. Also, use a slight elbow tuck when pressing and lowering the dumbbells.

Barbell Incline

The barbell incline press is another great assistance exercise for the bench press and the military press. Again, any angle will do, so don't sweat the small stuff.

Lunges

The lunge has gotten a bad rap in the strength training world for two reasons. First, it's used in the *fitness* world, and it's championed by women for toning and firming the legs and buttocks – two body parts nestled somewhere in the Problem Region. Next, they make you really, really sore. So, combine pain and apparent pussification, and you have an exercise that few people want to do.

These people are wrong. Lunges are great for building leg strength and mass. Of course, when you introduce these into the strength training world, the first thing you'll do is add a plate to whatever weight the "regular people" are using. This usually results in you doing a really bad genuflect, followed by a rounded-back get-up. *Awful*.

Take big strides, maintain an upright torso and do them right. Dumbbells, barbells, weight vest, bodyweight…*doesn't matter*. Walking lunge, backwards lunge…*doesn't matter*. Side lunges are kind of lame, though.

Step-ups

Remember when all the Olympic lifters thought the Bulgarians replaced squats with step-ups? And since they couldn't think for themselves, they did too? Remember when they realized the joke was on them? I still laugh about that today. In any case, the step-up is a great exercise for your legs and ass. Just don't be Cheater McCheaterstein and use a box that's 10" off the ground, push off with your back leg like a donkey, then post on message boards how you did

315x10 with each leg on step-ups. Actually, the worst part of this whole scenario is you posting on message boards.

As with lunges, you can use a variety of implements and different box heights. A general guideline is to use a box that puts your leg at about parallel to the ground. Single leg movements will reveal coordination, strength and balance problems in the body. Instead of wasting 14 days of assessments, you can do some one leg movements, squatting, deadlifting and Blast Strap pushups and get all your answers in about ten minutes.

Leg Press

I'm not a huge leg press fan, but I can see its value. It's not squatting, but it'll help strengthen and build your legs. The leg press is a machine, so I'm not going to tell you how to use it. Just use a full range of motion, and never use knee wraps.

Back Raise

Done on a back raise bench, a glute-ham bench or a 45-degree back raise bench, this movement is a simple and effective way to strengthen your lower back and hamstrings. Extra resistance can be added by putting a bar across your back. You can also attach a band to the bottom of the machine and put it around your neck, hold a plate in your hands or behind your head, or wear a weight vest.

Back raises are like very strict good mornings without the politics. Loading this exercise can be somewhat awkward. Holding a 10 pound plate in your hands is one thing, but putting 135 pounds on your back and getting into position is a pain in the ass.

Good Morning

The first mistake people make with good mornings is treating the exercise as a movement and not as a muscle builder/strengthener. When it's used as a movement, form is usually thrown out the window, and weight is all that matters. This is not a good idea. The good morning is used to build your lower back and hamstrings, so perform the exercise in a way that hits these muscles

correctly. This means pushing your butt way back, trying to keep somewhat of an arch in your back, and using as full a range of motion as you can. Don't be Half Rep McGee.

You don't have to go very heavy on these. I've used 500 pound loads with this movement, but I've gotten more out of doing 185 for strict reps.

Glute Ham Raise

Nothing works the hamstrings like glute-ham raises. Add in a full range of motion – from the bottom to the top – and you have an exercise that works the low back, hamstrings and calves. Not too shabby. If you suck at these, do them every day until you don't. Start each workout with 2-3 sets of 5 reps. Do this, and pretty soon you won't suck.

Here are my thoughts on the GHR, and how the exercise should be done:

- You MUST start with the motion of a back raise. The reason for this is to achieve a full range of motion and get some kind of erector work in during the movement. This action allows the GHR to be a thorough posterior chain movement. Having strong erectors for any sport is essential. Hell, it's important in LIFE.

- If you really can't perform a rep, either use a band (attached to the back of the machine and held in your hands by your head), or have a partner assist you.

- Once you can perform reps on your own, hold your hands and arms out in front of you as though you're holding a barbell.

- The next step in the progression is to fold your hands on your chest like a sleeping vampire.

- Once you've mastered the vampire position, pinch your earlobes with your fingers OR interlock your fingers with your hands behind your head.

- 5 sets of 10-15 reps with your bodyweight in this position should be achieved before you're ready to perform weighted GHR's.

Add weight by holding a plate or putting it behind your head, using a weight vest or using a band. I recommend using a full range of motion to involve your lower back.

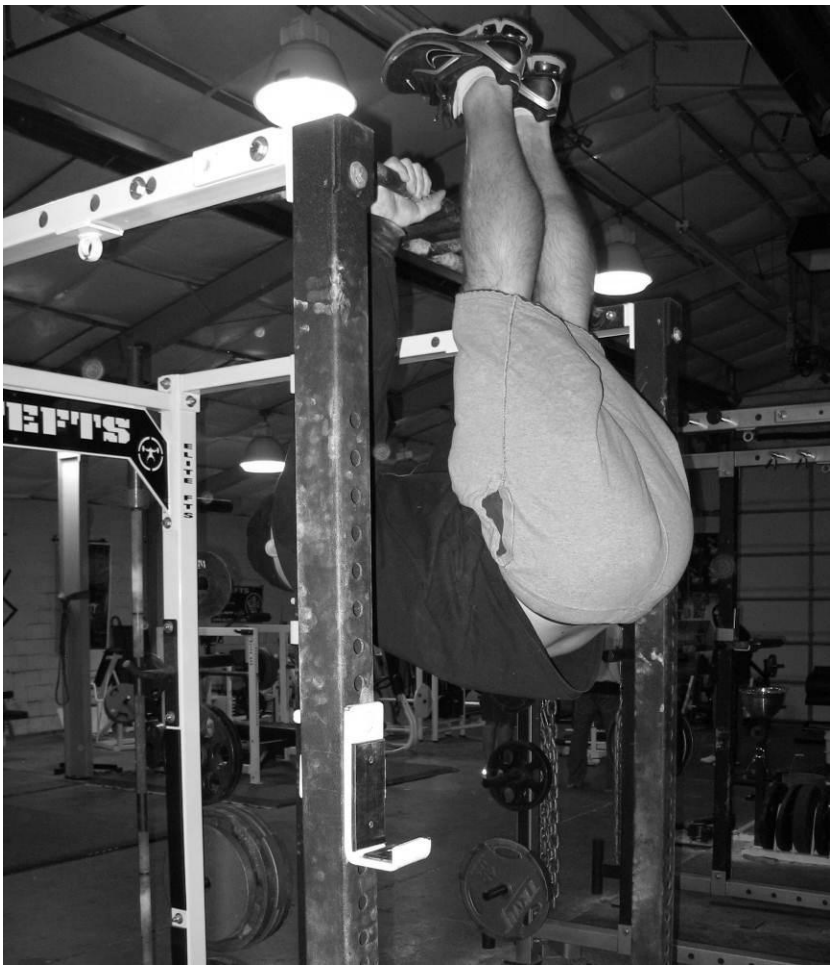
Sit-ups

You can do these on a glute-ham raise bench or a Roman chair. You can do them on the ground. You can do them with your feet anchored down. You can do them with your feet not anchored down. You can use bodyweight, or you can hold a plate behind your head, but please don't be that guy who does them while holding a plate, dumbbell – or, even worse, a medicine ball – on his chest. This is lame, and it doesn't do anything. Hold the weight behind your head and prepare to be humbled.

Dumbbell Side Bends

These are good for your abs, low back and obliques. If you're strict enough with them, and you use some heavy weight, everything will be sore. I recommend doing sets of 15-20, and don't use straps.

Hanging Leg Raises



These are popular with people who want to improve their ability to swing their legs and knees up while doing nothing for their abs, yet still want to call it ab work. To combat this, hang from a bar, and with straight legs, bring your feet to the bar. Return to the starting position, come to a complete stop, and begin the movement again. When you do it this way, you'll no longer ask about sets and reps because your body will tell you when a set is over.

Abdominal Wheel

The ab wheel made a comeback several years ago. Even though 90% of the people who bought it ended up throwing it in their garage, it was good to see a classic get some respect – at least until they started hooking up small motors to them to make it easier. This is akin to putting a baby seat in Grave Digger. Just kills the whole thing.

Do these on your knees for some reps, and on your feet to test yourself out. Try not to sag or A-frame too much. If you're on your knees, I recommend sets of 25-50.

How to Have Stronger Abs

If you ever are confused about what to do for abs, this is a simple abdominal circuit that we did for years when I first began powerlifting. At that time, my abs and low back were my weak point. For lower back, we did high rep barbell good mornings (sets of 10) and the following abdominal circuit. This was done 3-4 days per week.

- Weighted Sit-ups – 25 or 45lb plate held behind head for 10 reps
- Hanging Leg Raises – 10 reps
- Abdominal Wheel – 15 reps
- Side Bends – 100lb DB for 20 reps/side

These exercises were done right after each other (no…you don't run to each one and there is no time between exercises. Just do it.) We started with 2 times through for 2 weeks. Then did 3 times through for 2 weeks .After 4 weeks we were doing this 4 times through. Simple. Easy. Effective.

The Great Debate

The big debate with ab work is whether to do a lot of sets and reps (5x12, for example), or to work up to one heavy set – sort of the way you do with this program. There's no right or wrong answer for this. I usually tell people to do both. Some exercises are better with higher volume – face pulls and triceps pushdowns, for example – while others should be loaded fairly heavily and rep maxes should be established.

The drawback of always relying on just one of these principles is that sometimes you can't go for a rep max – or don't feel like it – after punishing yourself on the first exercise. The higher volume approach hits something of a snag when the opposite is true: you feel great and strong and want to work up to something heavy. My advice? Make some of these lifts a game time decision. See how you feel. For example, if you want to do dumbbell bench presses as an

assistance exercise after you bench press, and you feel great, do one or two progressive sets and one all-out set. Here's an example:

- 80x10
- 100x10
- 130x16

Track your personal records on some of your assistance lifts. When you feel great, try to break them. If you don't feel like going crazy with a lift, simply back off the weight and perform more reps (i.e., 4x12 with 80 pounds).

Side Note: Train Like a Bodybuilder

Whenever I say this, people cringe and run for cover, but there's a method to my madness. What's the goal of a bodybuilder? Not size or strength, but *symmetry*. They want their bodies to be symmetrical, from front to back and from side to side. This is how you have to think, and this is why there's a growing fascination with weak points and the posterior chain. It's also why so many injuries occur. When I tell you to train like a bodybuilder, I just want *balance* in your training. If you train your chest, train your back. If you train explosively with weights, train your conditioning level. If you train your conditioning, train your flexibility.

Don't get overzealous with one area for too long. If you do, expect to spend the same amount of time getting neglected areas up to par. Remember this when choosing assistance exercises, and try to achieve balance in your training with both exercises and muscles.

Assistance Work #1: Boring But Big

This is probably the most popular assistance work to accompany this program, and it's really very simple. After you perform the sets and reps of the program, you simply follow it up with the same exercise for 5 sets of 10 reps. For example:

Sunday

Military Press – 3 sets of 5 reps (or whatever week you're on)

Military Press – 5 sets of 10 reps

Chin-ups – 5 sets of 10 reps

Monday

Deadlift – 3 sets of 5 reps (or whatever week you're on)

Deadlift – 5 sets of 10 reps

Hanging Leg Raise – 5 sets of 15 reps

Wednesday

Bench Press - 3 sets of 5 reps (or whatever week you're on)

Bench Press – 5 sets of 10 reps

Dumbbell Row – 5 sets of 10 reps

Friday

Squat - 3 sets of 5 reps (or whatever week you're on)

Squat – 5 sets of 10 reps

Leg Curl – 5 sets of 10 reps

Don't let the simplicity of this fool you. You'll get sore, and you'll be tired. The big question here is how much weight to use for the "down" sets of 10 reps. The first time you try this, go light. *Very* light. Go with something you know will be easy – maybe around 30-40% of your training max. From there, you can work with 50-60%, or whatever you want. You don't have to progress on these down sets, although you don't have to use the same weight, either. Although you *can*. It simply doesn't matter! Just do 5 sets of 10 reps and build some muscle. Since you're already warmed up, you can pyramid *down* here. For example:

Squat – 315x10, 315x10, 275x10, 245x10, 245x10

You can stay with the same weight for all the sets, but that's boring as hell. Boring, but big. Make sure all percentages of Boring but Big are based on your training max, not your actual max.

Assistance Work #2: The Triumvirate

This is the smart man's way to train, because it'll force you to think about which exercises are the most effective. It'll make you experiment and reevaluate. All we're going for here is to limit each workout to 3 exercises, including the big one. Here's an example:

Sunday

Military Press – 5/3/1

Dips – 5 sets of 15 reps

Chin-ups – 5 sets of 10 reps

Monday

Deadlift – 5/3/1

Good Morning – 5 sets of 12 reps

Hanging Leg Raise – 5 sets of 15 reps

Wednesday

Bench Press - 5/3/1

Dumbbell Bench Press – 5 sets of 15 reps

Dumbbell Row – 5 sets of 10 reps

Friday

Squat - 5/3/1

Leg Press – 5 sets of 15 reps

Leg Curl – 5 sets of 10 reps

This is very similar to Boring But Big, but you don't have to do the same exercise over and over again, and you don't have to do 5 sets. Just do the 3 exercises you've found to be the most effective for your training.

One problem I see is that people feel they need to do something for everything. In reality, one or two exercises can get the work done. I used to have problems with my grip and my lockout when I deadlifted. I was given a laundry list of exercises I should do to bring these up: reverse hypers, glute-ham raises, kneeling squats, shrugs, plate pinches, gripper work, finger-strengthening work and gripper closes. *No thanks*.

After constantly failing and having my deadlift go nowhere, I came across Kroc Rows, as described earlier. These did the trick like nothing else I've tried.

I did one or two sets of high-rep dumbbell rows every week. My upper back got bigger, my grip problems went away, my lats got stronger, and my lockout improved – and because my upper back was so much stronger, my bench, in turn, was more stable. So with one exercise done for two sets a week at most, many of my problems went away.

The point of the story is this: *find your Kroc Row*. Quit farting around with a million things for your lower back and settle on the one that will make you strong. People ask me why I love dips so much. Have you found a better exercise for your shoulders, chest and triceps? I haven't.

What about chins? Besides a barbell or dumbbell row, few things can compare.

How about good mornings for your hamstrings and back?

Weighted sit-ups or hanging leg raises? You can feel free to go twist on your ball. I'll take these two.

I'm not in the weight room to jerk off to a bunch of different exercises and go nowhere. For more than 20 years, I've been walking into weight rooms, but I've never entered to train, exercise, work out or get a pump. I go into the weight room to *get strong*.

Assistance Work #3: I'm Not Doing Jack Shit

This is my favorite. I don't recommend it, but it's useful for non-beginners who have limited time to train. The I'm Not Doing Jack Shit program entails walking into the weight room, doing the big lift for the day (bench, squat, military or deadlift), and then walking out. I've done this plenty of times, especially when I've trained in commercial gyms.

There are some advantages to this. You'll be supremely focused on one thing: getting your sets done and breaking a PR. You won't be worried about your assistance work, whether a machine is going to be available, or how much good mornings suck. I've made this deal with myself many times before I've trained: If I do X weight for X amount of reps, I'm leaving.

I do this fairly often, and I'm sure it seems odd. I recently went to a commercial gym, warmed up, did my working sets and set a huge PR. I sat there for a little while, then decided to leave. As I was walking out, I looked around at the other people training, and I wondered whether anyone else had set a personal record that day. For my part, I know I walked out of there better than I did when I walked in.

The disadvantages here are obviously the lack of both volume and balance, but it can work for a while. If I had very little time to train, I'd do this. Sometimes, when you're struggling to find time to train, you think you can't make progress. With this type of training, you will.

Assistance Work #4: *Periodization Bible* by Dave Tate

This pattern of assistance work is inspired by an article Dave Tate wrote called *The Periodization Bible, Part I*. This is the piece that launched a thousand box squats, speed benches and good mornings, but very few deadlifts. *That was a joke*.

Day 1

Military Press (5/3/1)

- Shoulders or Chest – 5 sets of 10-20 reps (DB bench, DB Incline, DB Military, Incline press, Dips, Pushups)
- Lats or Upper Back – 5 sets of 10-20 reps (DB rows, Bent Over Rows, Chins, T-bar Rows, Lat Pulldowns, Face Pulls, Shrugs)

- Triceps – 5 sets of 10-20 reps (Triceps Pushdowns or Triceps Extensions)

Day 2

Deadlift (5/3/1)

- Hamstrings – 5 sets of 10-20 reps (Leg Curls, Glute-Ham Raise)
- Quads – 5 sets of 10-20 reps (Leg Press, Lunges, Hack Squats)
- Abs – 5 sets of 10-20 reps (Sit-ups, Hanging Leg Raises, Ab Wheel, DB Side Bend)

Day 3

Bench Press (5/3/1)

- Shoulders or Chest – 5 sets of 10-20 reps (DB bench, DB Incline, DB Military, Incline press, Dips, Pushups)
- Lats or Upper Back – 5 sets of 10-20 reps (DB rows, Bent Over Rows, Chins, T-bar Rows, Lat Pulldowns, Face Pulls, Shrugs)
- Triceps – 5 sets of 10-20 reps (Triceps Pushdowns or Triceps Extensions)

Day 4

Squat (5/3/1)

- Low Back – 5 sets of 10-20 reps (Reverse Hyper, Back Raise, Good Morning)
- Quads – 5 sets of 10-20 reps (Leg Press, Lunges, Hack Squats)
- Abs – 5 sets of 10-20 reps (Sit-ups, Hanging Leg Raises, Ab Wheel, DB Side Bend)

You can change exercises however you see fit. This won't make or break your program. You need to do enough assistance work to keep you balanced, strong and big – but not enough of it to break your performance on the big lifts.

There are no real disadvantages to this kind of assistance work.

Assistance Work #5 – Bodyweight

When I want to focus on feeling athletic and healthy while still maintaining muscle mass, I do this. It's probably my favorite template to do these days other than Jack Shit. This involves doing all your assistance work with bodyweight exercises. It'll put a lot less stress on you, especially with your lower body.

Military Press – 5/3/1	Deadlift – 5/3/1	Bench – 5/3/1	Squat – 5/3/1
• Chins • Dips	• GHR • Leg Raises	• Chins • Pushups	• One leg squat • Sit-ups

I recommend no less than 75 reps per exercise for each workout. The one leg squats can get a little tough, so you may want to substitute lunges instead. Bodyweight exercises always make me feel strong, flexible and healthy. They're a great way for beginners to learn how to lift, and they're great for older lifters who want to limit the stress they're putting on their bodies.

The advantage to this is that it's very easy on your body and joints. The disadvantage is that you can't really load most of these exercises, so the only way to improve is with more reps or sets – not with more weight.

Programming Your Assistance Work – The Simplest Strength Template

I get asked more questions about assistance work than anything else. Because of the enormous amount of variety with assistance work, I can see why. That is why I created a very easy and effective way of programming the "big" assistance lifts. These are the second lifts that are performed each day and the most important assistance lifts. These are multi-joint assistance lifts that are designed to make you stronger.

Like the 5/3/1 program, the sets and reps are varied each week and are given a set percentage for each set. You are going to have to test yourself on these lifts to get an estimated 1RM for

each lift. This may seem time consuming but so I'd rather take the time to figure out the lifts than be weak.

The next few pages is an example 4 week template of how the program will look during a full training cycle. Here are the sets and reps for each lift, for each week.

Week One – 50%x10, 60%x10, 70%x10

Week Two – 60%x8, 70%x8, 80%x6

Week Three – 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5

Week Four - 40%x5, 50%x5, 60%x5

You will notice that each day ONE big assistance lift is done. Just ONE. Don't try to apply this to multiple assistance lifts on the same day; one of the things people need to learn is that you don't have to kill yourself during every workout to make progress. You should always leave something in the weight room i.e. you should feel tired but not dead after a workout. Training for strength is a marathon, not a sprint.

For each lift (squat, bench, deadlift, press) there is a corresponding assistance lift that goes with it. I have paired the squat day with an assistance pulling movement, the deadlift with a squatting exercise, the press with a supine press and the bench press with an elevated press (incline, for example.)

There are many assistance exercises to choose from but they have to fall into the "big" category AND be an easily loadable exercise. Front squats would fall into this category, face pull and dumbbell benches would not. There is a complete list given to give you some ideas. Each of these lifts were chosen as great exercises to bring up your big lifts, make you strong and have been proven to work.

Finally, the assistance lifts are always done with the 90% rule – take 90% of your 1RM and work up the same as you would on your main lifts – 10lbs for lower body lifts and 5lbs for upper body lifts. The final sets are not done to failure and I would even caution you to do any more reps than the prescribed. As noted in the Training Rules to be Awesome: Strive to have a great workout on the main lifts, and a good workout on the assistance.

The assistance exercises that I have chosen to program are the ones that I believe to have the greatest carryover to the major lifts (squat, bench and deadlift). So these are: the front squat (or the safety bar squat), straight leg deadlift (or good morning), close grip bench press and incline press. For basic barbell movements, these are always great for being strong. Barbell rows are great but I believe that high rep dumbbell rows (Kroc Rows) are better for grip and upper back strength. So the template that is presented below, at this point in my training career, is the one that I recommend for anyone that wants to get stronger and more awesome. It includes all the appropriate big lifts and the assistance work that I believe works the best.

If you want to perform power cleans, please do so FIRST on any of the lower body days (squat and deadlift). You would program this just like a regular 5/3/1 lift.

I believe this is the simplest and easiest and most effective training template for getting stronger.

Week One

Monday

Press – 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5+

Close Grip Bench Press – 50%x10, 60%x10, 70%x10

Lats, Upper Back, Triceps, Biceps

Tuesday

Deadlift – 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5+

Front Squat (or Safety Bar Squat) - 50%x10, 60%x10, 70%x10

Hamstrings, Lower Back, Abs

Thursday

Bench Press – 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5+

Incline Press - 50%x10, 60%x10, 70%x10

Lats, Upper Back, Triceps, Biceps

Friday

Squat - 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5+

Straight Leg Deadlift - 50%x10, 60%x10, 70%x10

Hamstrings, Lower Back, Abs

Week Two

Monday

Press – 70%x3, 80%x3, 90%x3+

Close Grip Bench Press – 60%x8, 70%x8, 80%x6

Lats, Upper Back, Triceps, Biceps

Tuesday

Deadlift - 70%x3, 80%x3, 90%x3+

Front Squat (or Safety Bar Squat) - 60%x8, 70%x8, 80%x6

Hamstrings, Lower Back, Abs

Thursday

Bench Press - 70%x3, 80%x3, 90%x3+

Incline Press - - 60%x8, 70%x8, 80%x6

Lats, Upper Back, Triceps,Biceps

Friday

Squat – 70%x3, 80%x3, 90%x3+

Straight Leg Deadlift – 60%x8, 70%x8, 80%x6

Hamstrings, Lower Back, Abs

Week Three

Monday

Press – 75%x5, 85%x3, 95%x1+

Close Grip Bench Press – 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5

Lats, Upper Back, Triceps, Biceps

Tuesday

Deadlift – 75%x5, 85%x3, 95%x1+

Front Squat (or Safety Bar Squat) - 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5

Hamstrings, Lower Back, Abs

Thursday

Bench Press – 75%x5, 85%x3, 95%x1+

Incline Press - 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5

Lats, Upper Back, Triceps, Biceps

Friday

Squat - 75%x5, 85%x3, 95%x1+

Straight Leg Deadlift - 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5

Hamstrings, Lower Back, Abs

Week Four

Monday

Press – 40%x5, 50%x5, 60%x5

Close Grip Bench Press – 40%x5, 50%x5, 60%x5

Lats, Upper Back, Triceps, Biceps

Tuesday

Deadlift - 40%x5, 50%x5, 60%x5

Front Squat (or Safety Bar Squat) - 40%x5, 50%x5, 60%x5

Hamstrings, Lower Back, Abs

Thursday

Bench Press - 40%x5, 50%x5, 60%x5

Incline Press - 40%x5, 50%x5, 60%x5

Lats, Upper Back, Triceps,Biceps

Friday

Squat – 40%x5, 50%x5, 60%x5

Straight Leg Deadlift – 40%x5, 50%x5, 60%x5

Hamstrings, Lower Back, Abs

Notes:

- I firmly believe that this is one of the best and easiest templates to get strong. If you have any doubts on what to do for assistance work and you want to be strong, follow this template. It is easy to follow, attacks all the main areas you will need for strength (i.e. weak points) and allow you to program everything effectively.
- The additional assistance work for the upper body (Lats, Upper Back, Triceps, Biceps) and lower body (Hamstrings, Lower Back, Abs) I recommend picking one exercise for each of these body parts and simply doing 3 sets of 10-20 reps. If anything, do more back and upper back work on upper body day; you can really never do too much of it. Don't kill yourself on any of these lifts; you don't get a medal for being a Pro Barbell Curler or Sgt. Side Raise. Do the exercises with good form, get a pump, don't get psyched up for the lift and get out. If you press 225lbs overhead no one is going to care that you are using 20lbs dumbbells for rear dumbbell raises. Let the big lifts stress the joints and mind; let the small lifts stress the muscles. John Bott once told me, "Your body can't tell what weight you are using on these small lifts. It's best to use the lightest weight possible so you don't wreck your joints." That is wisdom.
- If you are doing the 5/3/1 for Powerlifting template, the weeks for the assistance lifts are changed accordingly. So for example:

Week One – 60%x8, 70%x8, 80%x6
Week Two – 50%x10, 60%x10, 70%x10
Week Three – 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5
Week Four - 40%x5, 50%x5, 60%x5

- I still recommend doing chins/pull-ups between every pressing set (including warm-ups for the pressing movement).
- Because you are already warmed up from the main lift of the day, you will only need to do 1 or 2 warm-up sets for the assistance lift (if at all). Keep the warm-up sets to no more than 5 reps.
- Do not change the big assistance lifts. Stick with one for at least 3-4 cycles and change if you'd like. You have to stick with them in order to see progress. As long as you are consistent and you program it correctly, you will get stronger.

Squatting Exercises

Front Squat

Safety Bar Squat

Box Squat

Pulling Exercises

Straight Leg Deadlift

Good Morning

Trap Bar Deadlift

Rack (or Block) Deadlift

Pressing Exercises

Log Press

Log Bench Press

Close Grip Bench Press

Football Bar (Swiss Bar) Bench Press

Football Bar (Swiss Bar) Press

Incline Press

Floor Press

2 Board Press

5/3/1 and Rest/Pause Training

One of the more innovative training programs in recent history is DC Training, or DoggCrapp Training. This was started, tweaked and made popular by Dante Trudel. The name, DoggCrapp is taken from his anonymous screen name on a forum – and it stuck. Dante struggled to gain weight and strength, graduating high school at around 120lbs. He began to grow and use typical high volume routines popularized by Arnold and many other bodybuilders. Though he gained weight and strength he believed that there had to be a better way. With a lot of experimenting, eating and research he came up with what we currently know as DoggCrapp training. Simply put, Dante is a beast. And his list of clients that have gained an enormous amount of weight (muscle mass) and strength is amazing.

DC Training is a detailed and well-thought out training program that uses rest/pause, breaking records and big movements. For those that don't know what rest/pause training is, here is an example. A lifter will perform a movement, let's use the press as an example, and perform an all-out set at a given weight. After this all out set, he will take 10-15 breaths and perform the press again with the same weight, obviously for less reps, to failure. He will rack the bar, take another 10-15 breaths and do another set to failure. So a rest/pause set would look like this:

Press – 155x10 reps, 10-15 breaths, 4 reps, 10-15 breaths, 2 reps

To make it easy: do one set for as many reps as you can, take short break, do the same weight to failure, take another rest and do one more set to failure. After the first set, your reps will diminish greatly so don't be alarmed. You may only get 2-3 reps on the final set.

Note: You do not rest/pause the deadlift and the squat.

For those that have done this sort of training, they know it is not easy. It requires a ton of mental and physical strength to get through one of these sets. And while it may not seem like a lot, you will be gassed and huffing for air when you are done. It is something that you have to physically ready for (including a LOT OF FOOD) and mentally prepared to handle. Each exercise that you do is done so that you break a personal record, so you have to focus. Additionally this is not for the undisciplined lifter that resorts to bad form when doing an exercise to get the additional reps. If you fall into this category, do not attempt this style of training.

Now let me go on record by saying that what I'm proposing is not DC Training. He has his own training program and it works. What I've done is applied his overall principles to the 5/3/1 training program and tweaked it to fit. I don't like when people bastardize my program and still refer to it as "5/3/1" so I will not say this is DC Training. Rather it is my interpretation on how to apply it to the 5/3/1 program.

There are a few templates you can use but as I sat down to think about this, I decided to give myself a limitation. All the exercises that are in the Rest/Pause template can be done in a garage gym i.e. simple, basic barbell exercises. Many of the exercises that are advocated by Dante are specialized machines such as the Hammer Incline Press Machine or something similar. There is nothing wrong with this but many people reading this do not have access to those machines but all have access to a barbell, rack and bench press. Or at least I hope you do. If you want to learn more about the system, please do some research. Dante has done a great job with providing the public with a ton of free information regarding the training, his diet recommendations and answering thousands of questions.

There are four rules I want everyone to follow when attempting this sort of training.

1. You will eat to grow – this is not time to be on a cutting diet or be in a caloric deficit. You must eat a ton of protein (strive for AT LEAST 2 grams of protein per pound of bodyweight. This is a minimum.) Every meal should have a huge serving of meat or

eggs, a protein drink and whatever carbs you can shove down your gullet. This is not a time to cut carbs.

2. Have a spotter – this is especially true on any bench press movement. And very important when you are using rest/pause.
3. You have to do some kind of cardio work – this is essential (more on this later).
4. You have to start at 90%of your true max.

The 5/3/1 Rest/Pause Template is done three days per week. These workouts should be done on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Because we are using percentages on many of the assistance lifts, you will have to know your maxes (or estimated maxes) for each of these. Again, take 90% of these maxes (your training max).

The training template that Dante suggests is as follows:

Day One

Monday - Chest, shoulders, triceps, back width, back thickness
Wednesday - Biceps, forearms, calves, hamstrings, quads
Friday – Repeat of Monday's workout
Monday – Repeat of Wednesday's workout

The workout for the first week would look like this, modified for 5/3/1.

Workout One

Bench Press - 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5+ (all out set, rest pause)

Press - 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5+ (all out set, rest pause)

Close Grip Bench Press – 50%x5, 60% x rest pause

Pull-ups – one warm-up set, then rest pause

Deadlift - 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5+, 65% x as many reps as possible (no rest pause performed on this lift)

Workout Two

Straight Bar Curls - 50%x5, 60% x rest pause

Reverse Grip Bar Curls - 50%x5, 60% x rest pause

Squat - 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5+, 65% x as many reps as possible (no rest pause performed on this lift)

Straight Leg Deadlift – 50%x5 (if needed), one all out set at 60% (no rest pause)

The problem with the above template is that we are training 3 of the 4 main lifts in the first session. You can certainly try this if you'd like but there are a few other ways we can tweak the 5/3/1 program and this style of training. We will keep the Workout One/Workout Two style for the first template.

Monday

Press - 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5+ (all out set, rest pause)

Deadlift - 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5+, 65% x as many reps as possible (no rest pause performed on this lift)

Chin-ups (palms forward) – one warm-up set, one rest pause set

Straight Bar Curls - 50%x5, 60% x rest pause

Straight Leg Deadlift - 50%x5, 60% x rest pause

Wednesday

Bench Press - 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5+ (all out set, rest pause)

Squat - 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5+, 65% x as many reps as possible (no rest pause performed on this lift)

Close Grip Bench Press - 50%x5, 60% x rest pause

Chin-ups (palms supinated) – one warm-up set, one rest pause set

Reverse Grip Bar Curls - 50%x5, 60% x rest pause

Friday

Press - 70%x3, 80%x3, 90%x3+ (all out set, rest pause)

Deadlift - 70%x3, 80%x3, 90%x3+, 70% x as many reps as possible (no rest pause performed on this lift)

Chin-ups (palms forward) – one warm-up set, one rest pause set

Straight Bar Curls - 50%x5, 70% x rest pause

Straight Leg Deadlift - 50%x5, 70% x rest pause

Monday

Bench Press - 70%x3, 80%x3, 90%x3+ (all out set, rest pause)

Squat 70%x3, 80%x3, 90%x3+, 70% x as many reps as possible (no rest pause performed on this lift)

Close Grip Bench Press - 50%x5, 70% x rest pause

Chin-ups (palms supinated) – one warm-up set, one rest pause set

Reverse Grip Bar Curls - 50%x5, 70% x rest pause

Wednesday

Press - 75%x5, 85%x3, 95%x1+ (all out set, NO rest pause. 75% x rest pause)

Deadlift - 75%x5, 85%x3, 95%x1+, 75% x as many reps as possible (no rest pause performed on this lift)

Chin-ups (palms forward) – one warm-up set, one rest pause set

Straight Bar Curls - 65%x5, 80% x rest pause

Straight Leg Deadlift - 65%x5, 80% x rest pause

Friday

Bench Press - 75%x5, 85%x3, 95%x1+ (all out set, NO rest pause. 75% x rest pause)

Squat - 75%x5, 85%x3, 95%x1+, 75% x as many reps as possible (no rest pause performed on this lift)

Close Grip Bench Press - 65%x5, 80% x rest pause

Chin-ups (palms supinated) – one warm-up set, one rest pause set

Reverse Grip Bar Curls - 65%x5, 80% x rest pause

Monday

Press - 75%x5, 85%x3, 95%x1+ (all out set, NO rest pause. 75% x rest pause)

Deadlift - 75%x5, 85%x3, 95%x1+, 75% x as many reps as possible (no rest pause performed on this lift)

Chin-ups (palms forward) – one warm-up set, one rest pause set

Straight Bar Curls - 65%x5, 80% x rest pause

Straight Leg Deadlift - 65%x5, 80% x rest pause

Wednesday

Bench Press - 75%x5, 85%x3, 95%x1+ (all out set, NO rest pause. 75% x rest pause)

Squat - 75%x5, 85%x3, 95%x1+, 75% x as many reps as possible (no rest pause performed on this lift)

Close Grip Bench Press - 65%x5, 80% x rest pause

Chin-ups (palms supinated) – one warm-up set, one rest pause set

Reverse Grip Bar Curls - 65%x5, 80% x rest pause

Friday

Begin new cycle

Notes:

- After a new cycle begins, add 5lbs to your upper body training maxes and 10lbs to your lower body training maxes. This includes all assistance work.
- I recommend going through two full 5/3/1 cycles before you deload.
- Use the normal deload percentages for one to two weeks. Don't rest pause anything.
- Make sure you are eating to grow. EAT! You will not recover, grow and get stronger without adequate calories. You must adhere to this. Don't be afraid to be big and strong.
- If you are performing the above template, I recommend only using a 2 mile walk every day for your cardio. This is essential to keeping your body fat levels in check. Do NOT skip this.

Now I have to admit – the above training template is a little bit insane. While it adheres to the spirit of DC Training, I don't know many people that would want to try it. When you are limited by a barbell you will have restrictions. Here is a more basic 5/3/1 Rest/Pause template that most people can easily adapt into their own training schedule with little change. We will use the standard 4 day training schedule (this can easily be adapted to a 3 day training schedule that is discussed in this book).

Week One

Monday

Press - 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5+ (all out set, rest pause)

Close Grip Bench Press - 50%x5, 60% x rest pause

Chin-ups (palms forward) – one warm-up set, one rest pause set

Straight Bar Curls- 50%x5, 60% x rest pause

Tuesday

Deadlift- 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5+, 65% x as many reps as possible (no rest pause performed on this lift)

Safety Bar Squat (or Front Squat) - 50%x5, 60% x as many reps as possible, no rest pause

Thursday

Bench Press - 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5+ (all out set, rest pause)

Incline – 50%x5, 60% x rest pause

Chin-ups (palms supinated) – one warm-up set, one rest pause set

Reverse Grip Bar Curls- 50%x5, 60% x rest pause

Friday

Squat – - 65%x5, 75%x5, 85%x5+, 65% x as many reps as possible (no rest pause performed on this lift)

Straight Leg Deadlift - 50%x5, 60% as many reps as possible, no rest pause

Week Two

Monday

Press - 70%x3, 80%x3, 90%x3+ (all out set, rest pause)

Close Grip Bench Press - 50%x5, 70% x rest pause

Chin-ups (palms forward) – one warm-up set, one rest pause set

Straight Bar Curls- 50%x5, 70% x rest pause

Tuesday

Deadlift- 70%x3, 80%x3, 90%x3+ 70% x as many reps as possible (no rest pause performed on this lift)

Safety Bar Squat (or Front Squat) - 50%x5, 70% x as many reps as possible, no rest pause

Thursday

Bench Press - 70%x3, 80%x3, 90%x3+ (all out set, rest pause)

Incline – 50%x5, 70% x rest pause

Chin-ups (palms supinated) – one warm-up set, one rest pause set

Reverse Grip Bar Curls- 50%x5, 70% x rest pause

Friday

Squat – - 70%x3, 80%x3, 90%x3+ 70% x as many reps as possible (no rest pause performed on this lift)

Straight Leg Deadlift - - 50%x5, 70% as many reps as possible, no rest pause

Week Three

Monday

Press - 75%x5, 85%x3, 95%x1+ (all out set, no rest pause, 75% rest pause)

Close Grip Bench Press - 60%x5, 80% x rest pause

Chin-ups (palms forward) – one warm-up set, one rest pause set

Straight Bar Curls- 60%x5, 80% x rest pause

Tuesday

Deadlift- 75%x5, 85%x3, 95%x1+ (all out set, no rest pause, 75% x as many reps as possible (no rest pause performed on this lift)

Safety Bar Squat (or Front Squat) - 60%x5, 80% x as many reps as possible, no rest pause

Thursday

Bench Press - 75%x5, 85%x3, 95%x1+ (all out set, no rest pause, 75% rest pause)

Incline – 60%x5, 80% x rest pause

Chin-ups (palms supinated) – one warm-up set, one rest pause set

Reverse Grip Bar Curls- 60%x5, 80% x rest pause

Friday

Squat – 75%x5, 85%x3, 95%x1+ (all out set, no rest pause, 75% x as many reps as possible (no rest pause performed on this lift)

Straight Leg Deadlift - - 60%x5, 80% as many reps as possible, no rest pause

Week Four (Deload)

Monday

Press – 40%x5, 50%x5, 60%x5 (no rest pause, just get required reps)

Close Grip Bench Press - 40%x5, 50%x5, 60%x5

Chin-ups (palms forward) – 3 sets of 10 reps

Straight Bar Curls- 3 sets of 10 reps

Tuesday

Deadlift- 40%x5, 50%x5, 60%x5, just required reps

Safety Bar Squat (or Front Squat) - 40%x5, 50%x5, 60%x5

Thursday

Bench Press - 40%x5, 50%x5, 60%x5 (no rest pause, just get required reps)

Incline – 40%x5, 50%x5, 60%x5

Chin-ups (palms supinated) – 3 sets of 10 reps

Reverse Grip Bar Curls- 3 sets of 10 reps

Friday

Squat – 40%x5, 50%x5, 60%x5, just required reps

Straight Leg Deadlift - 40%x5, 50%x5, 60%x5

Notes:

- You can do ab work every training day. This is not an exercise to be used as a rest/pause.
- Keep records of all main lifts and all assistance lifts. Personally, I only count the “main” set of these. I think about it this way – the first all-out set is a “strength test”. The two rest pause sets are “strength builders”.
- You can do some extra assistance work each day but make sure it is mindless and easy. Concentrate on the big lifts at hand. For upper body, be sure to do some extra upper back work (face pulls, rear laterals) for balance. Also, do some light, high rep lat work that is not taxing (lat pulldowns, cable rows, band pulldowns, dumbbell rows, chest supported rows would be great.) You can also do some triceps pushdowns. For lower body, extra abdominal work and bodyweight back raises would help tremendously. None of these exercises should be done as a rest/pause.

- If you are doing this template, you are free to do whatever conditioning you want. If you are used to doing the Prowler, sled work, stadium steps, sprints, strongman conditioning then do it.
- Just like any rest/pause training, you have to eat to grow and get strong. Don't eat like a waif.

Exercise Substitutions for Upper Body Assistance Lifts

- Incline Press
- Close Grip Bench Press
- Dips
- Floor Press
- Football Bar (Swiss Bar) Press
- Football Bar (Swiss Bar) Bench Press
- 2 Board Press
- EZ Bar Curls
- EZ Bar Reverse Curl
- Football Bar (Swiss Bar) Hammer Curls
- Lat Pulldowns
- T-Bar Rows
- Barbell Rows

Exercise Substitutions for Lower Body Assistance Lifts

- Front Squat
- Safety Bar Squat
- Box Squat
- Good Morning
- Trap Bar Deadlift
- Straight Leg Deadlift
- Rack Deadlift

North of Vag (N.O.V.)

I can't take credit for this name. I wish I could, but both the idea and the name come from my good friend Jim Messer. Jim and I have been friends since junior high, and we have the kind of friendship that doesn't require us to talk every week. Or even every year. This is more of an idea. A concept, if you will.

Figure 4: How to Start Your Chopper

Jim started training with the 5/3/1 method without my knowing it, and he's had great success. He emailed me and let me know about this. Here's part of an email he wrote to me:

*I feel compelled to tell you that after a few months of using the now-legendary 5/3/1, I have now moved somewhat north of being an utter vag. I f**ked my body up pretty badly last winter, stopped all physical activity, and thought that was pretty much gonna be it. Just another skinny f**king wimp. It's been a really long time since I've felt this good physically. By God, last week I puked in my mouth and almost blacked out squatting. I'd thought that time in my life was over.*

After I stopped laughing, I began thinking about his statement and about how many people seem to be moving and staying well south of vag. To quote Black Sabbath, this is a symptom of the universe. Then I started to contemplate how one stays in the Northern Hemisphere of the Holy Holes. What followed was the training template I'll show you now. It's very simple to follow:

1. *Warm-up:* foam rolling, static stretching and jumping rope (or something similar).
2. *Lift Weights:* 5/3/1; keep it basic and strong.
3. *Condition:* Run hills, push Prowler.

Figure 5: Prowler Work

That's it. Do this 3-4 times a week and you won't fall into the trap of being normal. You'll be strong, healthy and in shape. You won't make New Year's resolutions because you'll be living it every day. You can eat that final piece of pie and not count carbs because you just ran 20 hill sprints for the third time this week. You can wake up and not feel like shit because you've actually taken the time to foam roll and stretch. You actually have some traps from deadlifting. You don't fall for fitness trends, because you know what works. You stop caring what people say on the internet, because you're always making progress. You're always moving forward toward something.

People ask you how to train, and you answer, "I look at what you do, and then I do the exact opposite."

You'll actually be able to move because your feet will be fast from jumping rope. You won't be out of breath all the time. You'll be able to take on any physical activity you want. You'll be different once you've spent time straining to get a rep PR in the squat or pushed a Prowler for 40 minutes. Dealing with the idiots at work or your boss will no longer be an issue. It's hard to bring a man down after he's had three weeks of personal records in the gym. It's hard to get mad at the guy who cuts you off in traffic after you've left your lunch on top of the hill after bear crawling up it. Who cares about all that meaningless stuff? When your training and your life are moving forward, you certainly won't.

It doesn't take a lot to do this. You already give 8-10 hours a day to your boss and to your work. To boredom and to people and organizations that couldn't care less about you. Then your family and friends get the rest of your time.

What about you? Do you really think so little of yourself that you can't sacrifice an hour or two, 3-4 days a week, for yourself? This "me" time isn't spent shopping, watching TV or getting on the internet. You're spending it reinvesting in your body, building strength, and building character. Kicking ass and training consistently – and with some balance – will do wonders for both your body and your mind.

Get rid of all the meaningless crap in your life and your training. Get rid of the things that bleed your energy in the weight room and in life. What's better for you? The Prowler or a stroll on the treadmill? What do you think is going to make you better?

Don't fall for the crap that people are peddling on message boards, in magazines or on TV. Get your shit in order, and get your training in order. Start kicking ass, and take out the crap that doesn't matter. Start doing and believing in the stuff that works, and do it today and forever. You want science and studies? Fuck you. I've got scars and blood and vomit.

This is a call to arms for some of you. It is for me, too. Stop all the things that make you a pussy and steal your energy. Get your life back.

Figure 6: Squatting with Buffalo Bar

The Warm-up

Foam Roll

Perform 30-50 rolls per leg for the following areas of the body. I also recommend using a PVC pipe (this is very uncomfortable but effective). The PVC pipe should be a 6" diameter and 3 feet long. Wrap the PVC pipe in athletic tape so it doesn't slip.

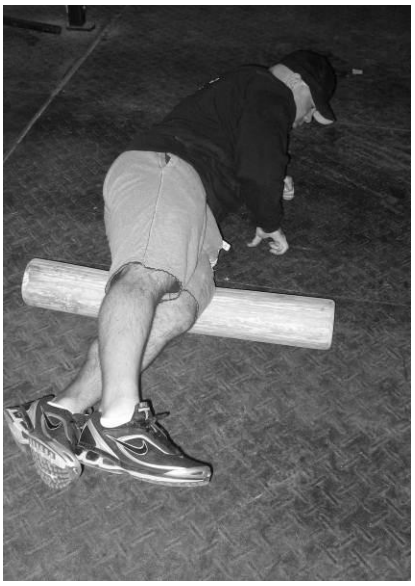


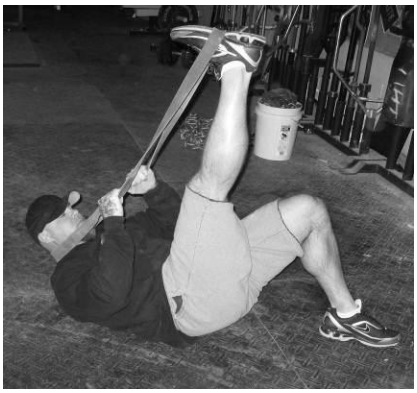
Figure 7: Use a PVC pipe if your IT band is really tight.

- IT Band/Hamstring/Quad
- Lower and Upper Back
- Piriformis

Stretching

Do 3-5 sets of 10 seconds for each stretch.

- Hamstrings/Low Back



- Hip Flexors/Quads

- Shoulders/Chest

Jump Rope

Take only as much rest as you need between each exercise to perform it correctly.

- 100 double leg
- 50 left leg
- 50 right leg
- 100 alternating left leg and right leg
- 50 high knees
- 100 double leg

5/3/1 – You have the book, so you know what to do. Do whatever assistance work/template you feel is appropriate. Do not ask. Just do it.

Conditioning

The two best things to do are Prowler pushes/sprints, or sprinting hills. This is not hard to do, and it's not hard to figure out. Just run. If you can, do better or more than you did the last time. Set a goal for yourself in terms of time or distance. I used the number of carries a true workhorse running back would want in a football game. The minimum here is 20. Minimum. Actually, that should be the first half. That's how I based my goal. If you don't have access to a hill or a Prowler, sprint with a weighted sled. If you don't have any of these, I don't know what to tell you.

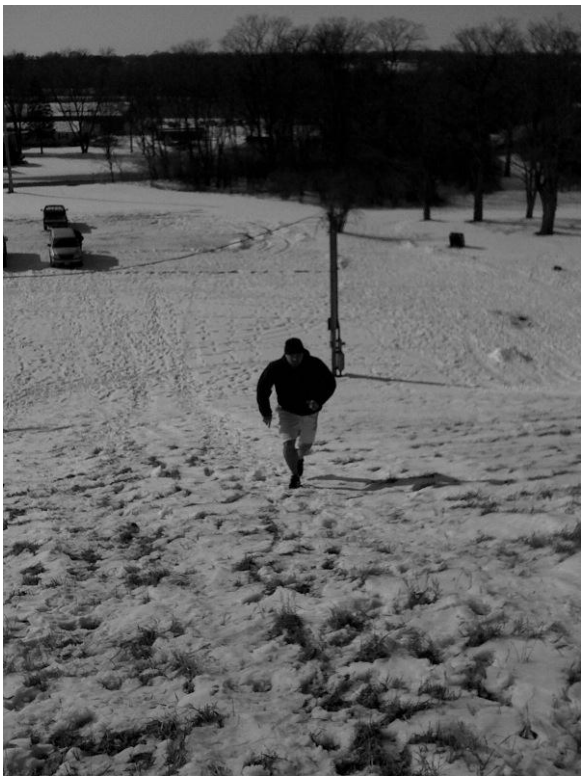


Figure 8: Running Hills in Springfield, Ohio

I don't care when or how you get this conditioning done, and I don't care whether it happens on your off days or not. This only time this matters is when you live in the Land of the Vag. Do it

when you have time. Make time for it. Just get it done. Nobody ever got strong or got in shape by thinking about it. They *did* it.

Training Three Days/Week

You can use the 5/3/1 method by training either 2, 3 or 4 days per week. This is determined by your schedule and what works best for you. Training four days a week seems to fall in line with most training programs. In my experience, either way works well. When I train three days per week, I get much more motivated to train the lifts, and I recover much better. Here's how to do it:

Week 1		
Monday	**Wednesday**	**Friday**
Military – 3x5	Deadlift – 3x5	Bench – 3x5
Week 2		
Squat – 3x5	Military – 3x3	Deadlift – 3x3
Week 3		
Bench – 3x3	Squat – 3x3	Military – 5/3/1
Week 4		
Deadlift – 5/3/1	Bench – 5/3/1	Squat – 5/3/1
Week 5		
Military/Deadlift - Deload	Bench – Deload	Squat- Deload
Week 6 (Begin cycle over again with new maxes)		

Nothing changes with this program. Assistance work stays the same as it would with any normal training routine. Don't try to overthink this.

Training Two Days/Week

Many people can only find two days per week to train. This is ideal if you're very busy or you have a difficult time recovering. If you're concentrating on a different training goal – you're getting in shape, or you're in-season in a sport – or you're making a lifestyle change (schooling, family, job) that requires a lot of time and energy, you can try this split. For most people who train two or three days per week, the focus is on the training and the workout – and not on getting stronger. Most people believe that if they can't lift four days per week, they can't get stronger or better. This is what's known as a "piss poor excuse," and everyone has one of these. If you need to train twice per week, here are two variations you can try.

Option One:

Monday

Squat – 5/3/1 sets and reps

Bench – 5/3/1 sets and reps

Assistance Exercises:

- Chin-ups – 3 sets of 10 reps
- Back Raises – 3 sets of 15 reps
- Dumbbell Bench Press – 3 sets of 10 reps
- Rear Laterals – 3 sets of 20 reps

Wednesday or Thursday

Deadlift – 5/3/1 sets and reps

Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps

Assistance Exercises:

- Dumbbell Rows – 3 sets of 10 reps
- Dips – 3 sets of 10 – 15 reps
- Good Mornings – 3 sets of 10 reps
- Curls – 3 sets of 10 reps

Note: On your off days, I recommend doing some conditioning work (Prowler, hills, etc.) and lots of stretching and foam rolling.

For your assistance work, I would pick one or two exercises per lift (so, 2-4 total assistance lifts) per day. Again, the most important thing to consider is making progress on the main lifts. Here is another variation.

Option Two:

Week 1

Monday

Squat – 5/3/1 sets and reps

Front Squat – 5 sets of 10 reps

Straight Leg Deadlift – 5 sets of 10 reps

Hanging Leg Raises – 5 sets of 10 reps

Wednesday or Thursday

Bench Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps

Press – 5 sets of 10 reps

Chin-ups – (do sets of 5-10 reps between all bench and press sets)

Ab Wheel – 5 sets of 10 reps

Week 2

Monday

Deadlift – 5/3/1 sets and reps

Safety Bar Squat – 5 sets of 10 reps

Good Morning -5 sets of 10 reps

Weighted Sit-ups – 5 sets of 12-20 reps

Wednesday/Thursday

Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps

Bench Press – 5 sets of 10 reps

Dumbbell Rows – 5 sets of 10 reps

Side Bends – 5 sets of 10 reps/side

Notes on Training Two Days a Week:

- If you're training two times per week, I probably wouldn't use a deload week unless it's absolutely necessary.
- Don't be afraid of really pushing the assistance work hard on Option Two. This option is great for those lacking time AND who want to build strength and size. The assistance work is hard, heavy and high volume. You WILL get sore!

5/3/1 Full Body Training

Full body training is nothing new. Older bodybuilders championed this style of training and it has been popularized by Bill Starr and Mark Rippetoe in the strength training world. I believe that this is a great way to train, from beginner to advanced, provided that you program the training and the lifts correctly. There are three parts (the fourth part is optional) to this program and you need to do each phase for at least two months before you move to the next phase. This will assure that your body gets used to the different training and the frequency of the lifts. Remember that all percentages are based on your training max.

The basic outline of this program is that you will squat, do some kind of press and some kind of pull every day, three days per week. You will always squat first.

Phase One:

<u>Monday</u>

Squat – 5/3/1 sets and reps

Dumbbell Bench Press – 3 sets of 10-15 reps

Dumbbell Rows – 3 sets of 10 reps

<u>Wednesday</u>

Squat – 40%x5, 50%x5, 60%x5

Bench Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps

Chins/Pull-ups – 3 sets of 10 reps

<u>Friday</u>

Squat – 40%x5, 50%x5, 60%x5

Press - 5/3/1 sets and reps

Deadlift - 5/3/1 sets and reps

Notes:

- The squat weights are initially fairly light to help you get used to the increased squatting. Feel free to push the reps on each of these sets to 10 reps (on the extra squat days).
- For the push exercise (dumbbell bench press) and the two pulling exercises (chins and dumbbell rows) feel free to substitute any kind of push or pulling exercise you like.

Phase Two:

Monday

Squat – 5/3/1 sets and reps

Dumbbell Bench Press – 3 sets of 10-15 reps

Dumbbell Rows – 3 sets of 10 reps

Wednesday

Squat – 65%x3, 75%x3, 85%x3

Bench Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps

Chins/Pull-ups – 3 sets of 10 reps

Friday

Squat – 65%x3, 75%x3, 85%x3

Press - 5/3/1 sets and reps

Deadlift - 5/3/1 sets and reps

Notes:

- The intensity (percentage of your 1RM) is increased on the extra squat days. This will allow you to get used to squatting heavier weights on the squat more frequently. The volume is still low.
- For the push exercise (dumbbell bench press) and the two pulling exercises (chins and dumbbell rows) feel free to substitute any kind of push or pulling exercise you like. These exercises can include: incline presses, dumbbell incline press, dumbbell press, floor press, dumbbell floor press, dips, lat pulldowns, chest supported rows and t-bar rows.

Phase Three:

Monday

Squat – 5/3/1 sets and reps

Dumbbell Bench Press – 3 sets of 10-15 reps

Dumbbell Rows – 3 sets of 10 reps

Wednesday

Squat – 75%x3, 85%x3, 95%x1

Bench Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps

Chins/Pull-ups – 3 sets of 10 reps

Friday

Squat – 75%x3, 85%x3, 95%x1

Press - 5/3/1 sets and reps

Deadlift - 5/3/1 sets and reps

Notes:

- The intensity is greatly increased on the extra squat days. After 2-4 months of the first phases, your body will be ready for the increased squatting and the increased intensity.
- For the push exercise (dumbbell bench press) and the two pulling exercises (chins and dumbbell rows) feel free to substitute any kind of push or pulling exercise you like. These exercises can include: incline presses, dumbbell incline press, dumbbell press, floor press, dumbbell floor press, dips, lat pulldowns, chest supported rows and t-bar rows.

Phase Four (OPTIONAL INSANITY)

Monday

Squat – 5/3/1 sets and reps

- 3 sets of 5 reps of box jumps in between squat warm-ups
- 3 sets of 10 reps of chins between squat sets

Power Clean – 5/3/1 sets and reps

- Hip flexor stretch between all sets

Dumbbell Bench Press – 3 sets of 10-15 reps

- 3 sets of 10 reps of chins between all dumbbell bench press sets

Wednesday

Squat – 75%x3, 85%x3, 95%x1

- 3 sets of 5 reps of box jumps in between squat warm-ups
- 3 sets of 10 reps of chins between squat sets

Bench Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps

- 3 sets of 10 reps of chins between all bench press sets, including warm-ups

Good Mornings – 3 sets of 10 reps

- 3 sets of 10 reps of chins between all good morning sets

Friday

Squat – 75%x3, 85%x3, 95%x1

- 3 sets of 5 reps of box jumps in between squat warm-ups
- 3 sets of 10 reps of chins between squat sets

Deadlift - 5/3/1 sets and reps

- Hip flexor stretch between all sets

Press - 5/3/1 sets and reps

- 3 sets of 10 reps between all press sets, including warm-ups

Note: This requires time, strength, commitment, and mental toughness. You had better be ready!

More Full Body Training Ideas

The next template isn't really a 5/3/1 based. It is something a friend of mine would do and I think it is incredibly awesome. I only add this as something very cool to do when you don't have a meet coming up, you are an advanced lifter and just want to be awesome and show how strong you are. He would train full body, three days per week and his training would look like this for EVERY workout:

Monday/Wednesday/Friday

Squat – 135x5, 225x5, 315x5, 405x5, 495x5

Bench Press – 135x5, 225x5, 275x5, 315x5, 365x5 (sometimes work to 405)

Deadlift - 135x5, 225x5, 315x5, 405x5, 495x5

He'd finish off each session with some curls and some lat pulldowns and that was it. The guy was huge and I do this in honor of him. Each of his sets was explosive and looked easy as hell. Sometimes he'd use the standing press, push press or incline press in place of the bench press. But he's always squat and always deadlift. I asked him if he ever changed these exercises. His response? "Why the hell would I do that?"

More Squatting

Here is another template that I have never tried and I'm just throwing this out there to see if anyone wants to. Use with caution. This template is all about More Squatting. I firmly believe that the squat is the basis for all strength. Not only does it require tremendous leg and hip strength but it requires a pair of balls to squat hard and heavy. You can always drop a deadlift when it gets tough. Missing a squat is a little bit scarier. And nothing tests your will more than a heavy barbell across your back and smashing your lungs.

Monday

Squat – 5/3/1 sets and reps

Dumbbell Bench Press – 3 sets of 10-15 reps

Dumbbell Rows – 3 sets of 10 reps

Tuesday

Squat – 65%x3, 75%x3, 85%x3

Dumbbell Incline Press – 3 sets of 10-15 reps

Chin-ups – 3 sets of 10 reps

Wednesday

Squat – 75%x3, 85%x3, 95%x1

Bench Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps

Chins/Pull-ups – 3 sets of 10 reps

Thursday

Squat – 65%x3, 75%x3, 85%x3

Incline Press – 3 sets of 10-15 reps

Chin-ups – 3 sets of 10 reps

Friday

Squat – 75%x3, 85%x3, 95%x1

Press - 5/3/1 sets and reps

Deadlift - 5/3/1 sets and reps

Saturday/Sunday: OFF

Figure 9: Five Points - Native Owned

5/3/1 and Crossfit

I know this is going to be read and re-read and highly scrutinized. I'm not going to go into detail to the uninformed of what Crossfit is or what it has turned into

Things that suck about Crossfit

1. Programming – It's no secret that the programming is awful. You can try to explain the rhyme/reason for the randomness but just be honest; when you have no end goal (competition, for example) other than being a good worker-outer it's hard to program TODAY when you don't where you want to be tomorrow. This is known as AttaBoy Training. Lots of motivational screaming and ass slaps. Myopic training ("Let's just work really hard!") is probably not a bad idea for the chubby masses but not ideal when you want to be great. Just because a trainer or a gym has good intentions to share their fitness enthusiasm does not mean he is a good coach or the gym is great. Good intentions when combined with ignorance and lack of experience are a recipe for bad form, limited results and injury.

2. Apprentice, never a Master – Crossfit claims that they want to be good at everything. Good luck with that one. The quest to be fit as a cross country runner, fast as a sprinter, strong as a powerlifter and built like Greek god is not only endless but pointless. The reality Is that you can work to be great at a few and those will carry over to being good at the others. If you are strong, lean and in good condition, things start falling into place. This is not a revolutionary idea. And maybe I'm in the minority with the mindset of wanting to be great at one thing, and not average at a bunch. Or at least as great as I can be.

Things I like about Crossfit

1. When Mark Rippetoe was brought on (he has since left) to teach the basic barbell lifts, the Gods of Iron smiled. Barbell training is a lost art in today's fitness world; all one needs to do is peak their head into any commercial gym and see the piles of machines and cardio wheels that take up floor space.

2. Though often a negative when used as a cover up of SMART programming and training, the idea of hard work to achieve a goal has also been lost. Pills, elimination diets and infomercials all play to the "You don't even have to change your lifestyle" to lose weight/get in shape. At least Crossfit makes you sweat. The good news is you can still work hard AND program correctly.

I believe that any great training program has two things at the top of the training pyramid; Strength training and mobility. These two factors will greatly determine how you perform more than anything. As a person develops strength his entire body changes – he becomes leaner and faster. He is able to jump higher and move quicker. This is something I learned in 8th

grade; I went from being a very good cross country runner (and not very fast) to being the fastest kid in school after several months of weight training. After running a race and winning, I was walking back to the locker room and thought, "The stronger I get, the faster I will run." Now there is a ceiling to this – an athlete that squats 600lbs may not get faster if he improves his squat to 700. But he is already very strong and it may be pointless to spend the time and energy to do so. The key is to make the weak athlete STRONGER. And this is done with a well thought out strength training program that teaches principles that can extend through YEARS, not just for a workout.

Combining a well-thought out strength program like 5/3/1 and the principles of heavy conditioning work such as Crossfit is not hard to do; you just need to put the correct pieces together. The standard Crossfit Workout of the Day, when combined with the 5/3/1 program will not work. The randomness of the WOD's do not work with a detailed strength training program; too many things are working opposite of each other. The only time this could work would be to train three days/week (on a 10 day rotation; see the example earlier in the book) and picking your favorite WOD's to do after the main strength work. While not ideal, this could work.

In order to program the weight training and the heavy conditioning work correctly they have to complement each other and not interfere with the next workout. With strength training the core of the training, the template will always start with one basic movement and is followed up with one or two assistance movements. For example:

- Deadlift – 5/3/1, Front Squat (assistance)
- Squat 5/3/1, Good Morning (assistance)
- Bench Press 5/3/1, Chin-ups (assistance)
- Press 5/3/1, Bent Over Rows (assistance)

These lifts would be done with purpose and with precision. There is nothing timed, no circuits and adequate rest is given to perform at the highest level. Following the strength work, the heavy conditioning circuits will begin. The following template can be used, performed in a circuit fashion from exercise 1 through 4.

1. **Full Body Movement** – tire flip, medicine ball slams, medicine ball throws overhead, medicine ball squat to throw, power cleans, power snatches, hang cleans, hang snatches, box jump, long jumps (done as singles (stop and hold landing) or as triple jumps), lunge jumps, kettlebell snatch, star jumps, stone loads, sledgehammer swings, sandbag cleans, sandbag shouldering, sandbag shoulder to carry, bottoms up squats (squat, hold, press, stand), clean/front squat/press, deadlift/clean/front squat/press, dumbbell cleans, dumbbell snatches

2. **Assistance Movement** (see below)

3. **Conditioning Movement** – short sprints (consecutive 40 yards, for example), long runs (400-800M), Prowler push (walk and sprint), sled drag (forward/backward), treadmill sprints, Air Dyne bike sprints, rower, jump rope, heavy bag, speed bag, mountain climbers, bear crawl, wheelbarrow walks, burpees, jumping jacks, ice skater/speed skaters, battling ropes, weighted vest elevated treadmill walk,

4. **Assistance Movement** (see below)

5. **Core Movement** – sit-ups, lying leg raises, planks (front and side), hanging leg raises, abdominal wheel, leg raise throws, stability ball sit-ups, medicine ball sit-up to throw, medicine ball leg raise, dumbbell side bends, crunches, medicine ball side throws (to partner), rainbows, Russian twist, hanging windshield wipers, bicycles, scissor kicks, side plank raises, sit-up with cross punch to partner, reverse crunches, pikes, alternate toe touch and plank (contra-lateral toe touch), plank slide outs, inch worms, side plank reach throughs, cable/band standing side twists, plank punches/pulls

Assistance Movements for Lower Body: squat, deadlift, trap bar deadlift, front squat, lunge, step-up, safety bar squats, straight leg deadlift, yoke walk (barbell walk), back extensions, good mornings (bar and band), kettlebell swings, Hungarian core blaster, jump squats, rack deadlift, side lunges (lateral lunges), leg press, hack squat, hamstring curls, TRX hamstring curls, glute ham raises, reverse hypers, glute bridges, single leg deadlift, pistol squats, single leg squats (barbell and dumbbell), pin wheel lunges, static hold lunge (for time), wall sits (for time).

Assistance Movements for Upper Body: bench press, dips, press, incline, dumbbell presses (flat, incline, standing), floor press, board presses, swiss bar press, swiss bar bench press, close grip bench, chin –ups, pull-ups, rope chins, ring chin-ups, rope climbs, hand/hand sled pulls with rope, lat pulldowns, dumbbell rows, barbell rows, chest supported rows, push-ups, ring pushups, push press, dumbbell push press, single arm dumbbell bench press, single arm press

In order to accurately program the workouts, the lower and upper body days templates would look like this:

Upper Body

Strength training

- Main movement (bench press or press)
- Assistance strength movement

Conditioning work

- Full body movement
- Assistance movement for upper body
- Conditioning movement
- Assistance movement for upper body
- Core Movement

Lower body

Strength Training

- Main movement (squat or deadlift)
- Assistance strength movement

Conditioning work

- Full body movement
- Assistance movement for upper body
- Conditioning movement
- Assistance movement for upper body
- Core Movement

You can mix and match any of the exercises that are listed above (or you can choose your own). However, you will be limited by what you have access to, the weather and the space that you have. For example, in the setting of a garage gym (and access to a street or yard) one could do the following workout.

Bench Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps

Barbell Rows – 5 sets of 10 reps

3 Rounds of the following:

- Med Ball Slams – 20, 15, 10
- Dips – 20, 15, 10
- Burpees – 20, 15, 10
- Chin-ups – 20,15, 10
- Planks – 1 minute hold

Squat – 5/3/1 sets and reps

Good Mornings – 3 sets of 10 reps

2 Rounds of the following:

- Hang Clean – 185x20
- Wall Sits – 2 minutes
- Mountain Climbers – 30 reps/leg
- Chin-ups (these can be done both days) – 15 reps
- Pikes – 20 reps

For those that are new to this kind of training and want to start, my advice is to pick exercises that you know how to do. Make sure the loading exercises (squat, bench press, deadlift, etc.)

done in the circuit make sure to keep them light and the reps low. Remember this: you can be as creative as you want or as basic as you want.

You don't have to perform the circuits in the exact fashion as shown above. Feel free to vary them a bit but stick with the theme and the spirit of the programming. For example, a brutal workout would look like this:

Squat – 5/3/1 sets and reps

Straight Leg Deadlift – 3 sets of 10 reps

- Squat – 225x15
- Prowler Push – 2x40 yards
- Deadlift – 225x15
- Sit-ups – 25 reps

Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps

Dumbbell Rows – 3 sets of 10 reps

Done for 3 rounds

- Dips to failure
- Burpees – 20
- Chins to Failure
- Abdominal Wheel - 20

Notes:

- Be sure that each workout and circuit you choose is appropriate for you, not for someone else. It has to be tailored and suited to your strength level, your training level, the equipment you have access to and your current state of conditioning. Progress is not measured simply by how much you set martyr yourself during each training session.
- You don't have to be fancy to be great – circuit training with basic exercises and coupled with some basic conditioning movements may be all you need. Fitness enthusiasts (aka Fitness Hipsters) rely on gadgets because they are easily bored and easily swayed by the sparkle of the latest and greatest. Lifers (yes, LIFERS NOT lifters) know where the results come from.
- Do not perform power cleans or any other variation of the Olympic lifts on upper body days.
- On the deload week, deload! You can still do conditioning work but keep it limited to non-circuits such as Prowler pushing, running/sprinting, etc. Let your body rest.

5/3/1 for Beginners

Generally, I tell everyone to just do the program as is, regardless of training age.

Of course, if you're a trainer and are using the program with a novice athlete or someone new to training, simply use your experience to make whatever changes are required – though there shouldn't be many.

Now if you're a beginner and are working out without any guidance whatsoever, it's probably best to just stick with the basic program. One of the worst things a young lifter can do is take advice from other beginners on message boards – they usually have all the advice and none of the experience.

Below is one beginner modification that's permissible, and effective. It's a subtle, easy way to add in some extra work on the main lifts without compromising the program or the philosophies it was built upon.

You perform a full-body routine, three days a week. Full body strength routines are the best way for novice lifters to quickly get strong, provided the program is non-retarded (i.e. adheres to an intelligent progression system).

Instead of just one main lift per workout (using the 5/3/1 set-up), two main lifts are used for additional weekly exposures. The second main lift, however, should not be performed 5/3/1 style; instead, use a standard 3 sets of 5 reps, starting at 55% of your training 1RM for the first set of 5 and increasing the weight by 10% each successive set.

The exception is the deadlifting day with presses as the second lift. Just do 5/3/1 here across the board.

The program is set up the same way – taking 90% of your max and working up slowly. All percentages are based on that training max.

The first thing I'll be asked is, "What do I do for assistance work?" Because you're doing a full body routine each day and using compound lifts, you need to keep the assistance work to a minimum. Chins, dips, back raises, neck work, and curls will serve you well. Stick with that.

The program is nothing revolutionary, but it's effective. When you're given a training max and the exact percentages to use every workout, it removes all doubt as to what's heavy, medium, or light. This is simple and easy to use for any beginner.

Intermediate lifters, provided the percentages on the non-5/3/1 days are lowered by 10 percent each set, can also use this basic structure. (As you get more experienced, you can't handle the extra work at a heavier percentage.)

Monday

Squat – 5/3/1 sets/reps
Bench – 55%x5, 65×5%, 75%x5
Assistance work

Wednesday

Deadlift – 5/3/1 sets/reps
Press – 5/3/1 sets/reps
Assistance work

Friday

Bench – 5/3/1 sets/reps
Squat – 55%x5, 65%x5, 75%x5
Assistance work

Using Excel for 5/3/1

An easy way to plan and track your 5/3/1 workouts is to use Excel. Here's a sampling of the formulas I use to plan my training. Since I'm not an Excel expert, I don't really know how to explain this if you don't know what it is. If you know anything about Excel, these formulas should mean something to you. If not, simply use a calculator and figure things out the old fashioned way. I place an entire year's worth of workouts in Excel – without the assistance work – and have tabs for each month. The following Excel sheet details the first two weeks of training. Again, I'm not an expert, so this is just a reference guide.

- =CEILING is a function that rounds the numbers.
- A4 is simply the box is which the max number is put in. In the case of the military press, A4 contains the number 160.
- .The * symbol tells Excel to multiply the number is A4 by the number that follows it.
- The percentages are shown as numbers, (.65, .75, .80, etc).
- The number 5 that follows the percentages tells the CEILING function to round the nearest five pounds.
- On one Excel spreadsheet, I have 12 Excel books; one for each month. This way I can look at what the workouts will be like in the next year.
- I never put my assistance work in the Excel sheet.

Week I		**Week II**	
Military		**Military**	
160			
Reps	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*
5	=CEILING(A4*0.65,5)	3	=CEILING(A4*0.7,5)
5	=CEILING(A4*0.75,5)	3	=CEILING(A4*0.8,5)
5	=CEILING(A4*0.85,5)	3	=CEILING(A4*0.9,5)
Deadlift		**Deadlift**	
345			
Reps	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*
5	=CEILING(A11*0.65,5)	3	=CEILING(A11*0.7,5)
5	=CEILING(A11*0.75,5)	3	=CEILING(A11*0.8,5)
5	=CEILING(A11*0.85,5)	3	=CEILING(A11*0.9,5)
Bench		**Bench**	
235			
Reps	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*
5	=CEILING(A18*0.65,5)	3	=CEILING(A18*0.7,5)
5	=CEILING(A18*0.75,5)	3	=CEILING(A18*0.8,5)
5	=CEILING(A18*0.85,5)	3	=CEILING(A18*0.9,5)
Squat		**Squat**	
305			
Reps	*Weight*	*Reps*	*Weight*
5	=CEILING(A25*0.65,5)	3	=CEILING(A25*0.7,5)
5	=CEILING(A25*0.75,5)	3	=CEILING(A25*0.8,5)
5	=CEILING(A25*0.85,5)	3	=CEILING(A25*0.9,5)

Eating for Size and Strength

Nothing is more confusing than diet. There are a million opinions, books, experts and internet heroes claiming to know how to eat, what to eat and judging by the scare tactics out there, what NOT to eat. I'm not sure if there isn't a food out there that hasn't been linked to cancer, heart disease, death, diabetes and obesity. Even fruit has gotten a Frowny Face from some nutritional experts. Really? You think apples are what make people fat?

The bottom line is that if you want to be big and strong, your diet has to be big and strong. You can't expect to eat like a mouse and lift like a lion. There are some exceptions to this rule but let's just leave that for the ignorant.

Like my programming and training, I have made eating as easy and simple as I can. But you are going to have to suspend some of your Gotta Have Abs mentality if you want to get stronger. Some people will claim that they have gotten stronger when eating like a waif, but they sure as hell aren't strong. There is a difference. If you want to move some weight, you are gonna have to gain some weight. This is especially true of squatting and any pressing movement. You want those lifts to go up? Eat like mean it.

There are two simple templates of eating to gain size and strength. One is meant for leaner, slower gains. The second is meant for those that just want to get big and strong. Both will work; you will have to decide what is good for you and your goals.

Plan One

This plan is for those that want leaner, slower weight gain.

Each meal will consist of the following, in this order:

1. 50g protein shake (you choose whey, casein or whatever you want or tastes good). You can mix this with milk or water.
2. 30-50g of protein from eggs, chicken, fish or beef. Eat as much whole food protein as you can but no less than 30-50g of protein. Do not eat any other food until this is done.
3. One serving of a fruit or vegetable.
4. Any amount of carbs you can stuff in your face. This can be rice, potatoes, oatmeal or some doughnuts. If you want the gains to be leaner, opt for less carbs and cleaner

carbs. If you want to gain some weight, eat as much of whatever you can get your hands on.

5. Strive to start with 4 meals/day with this eating plan. You can work yourself up to 6 if you have the time and the appetite.

Plan Two

This plan is for those that want to gain weight quickly.

Each meal will consist of the following, in this order;

1. 30-50g of protein from eggs, chicken, fish or beef. Eat as much whole food protein as you can but no less than 30-50g of protein. Do not eat any other food until this is done.
2. 100g of carbs; this can be clean carbs or whatever you can fill your mouth with.
3. One serving of fruit or vegetable
4. 50g protein shake, preferably mixed with milk and whatever else you can dump in the blender for calories. Peanut butter or whipping cream will add a ton of calories and fat.
5. Strive to start with 4 meals/day with this eating plan. You can work yourself up to 6 if you have the time and the appetite. If you want to put on size and get strong, you had better learn how anabolic food can be. Get in a ton of protein (at least double your bodyweight).

Plan Two (slightly revised)

This revised Plan Two is what I did in high school. It may not be recommended for everyone but it worked very well for me. So I feel obligated to share it.

1. Eat whatever food you want. And eat a lot of it.
2. After each meal, no matter how full, drink a huge protein drink with milk.
3. Do this 4 or more times a day.

How Dedicated Are You?

With any of these plans it is only going to work if you are 90% compliant with your diet over 6 months. Yes, 90% complaint. How do we monitor this? Use the chart provided to track each and every meal that you eat. In order for you to be complaint with these two diet plans (or any plan), you have to do these things 90% of the time:

1. Get a 50g (or more) protein shake for each meal.
2. Eat 30-50g of protein or more (eggs, beef, chicken, fish) for each meal.
3. Eat 1-2 servings of vegetables or fruit for each meal.
4. Eat 100 (or more) grams of carbs for each meal.

Every meal that follows the following rules gets a "check" mark. ANY meal that doesn't gets an "X" There are no "If's" or substitutions. You either do it or you don't. At the end of the week, add up the amount of check marks and divide that number by 28 (the minimum amount of meals you should eat a week). In order to hit 90%, you have to eat 25 "proper" meals a week. If you don't reach this number you need to reassess your commitment. The proof is in the numbers and your actions. If you feel that 90% is too much, you sound very average.

The Simplest and Most Effective Trick for Getting Stronger and Gaining Weight

No matter which plan you choose to gain weight and size there is one trick that will work wonders for gaining size and strength. This is key.

Ready?

Wake up in the middle of the night and eat a meal (pre-make this meal) or have a huge protein drink with milk or water. This is such a game changer for anyone that wants to up the ante. Does it suck? It does for the first couple of nights. You drag your tired ass to the kitchen, barely awake and shove food and drink down your mouth. After a week, your body will get used to waking up and you will wake up hungry. This simple trick is amazing and like Keyser Soze once said, you have to be willing to do what the other guy isn't. Check your level of dedication and see if you can man up to the challenge.

Eating to Lose Weight

This seems to be all the rage these days; eating to get lean. For the general public, I get it. For the older lifter who is already big, it makes sense. For the younger, skinny kid who has more bone than muscle…I just shake my head. I do not advocate skinny androgynous males; this is in direct opposition to everything I hold sacred. Men should not be in skinny jeans; men should be on a quest for jeans that can barely hold their thighs.

My eating plan for losing weight is very similar to the ones above; it's a no nonsense approach for losing weight. It is terribly simple. I developed this plan when I was playing football at the University of Arizona. After years of suffering with Graves' disease (this is a condition known as hyperthyroidism, an overactive thyroid) I had my thyroid removed. Needless to say, I gained a ton of weight. From late August to November, I went from 180lbs to 240lbs. All my lifts skyrocketed and I felt great. It was the first time in years that I wasn't sweating profusely and never gaining weight. BUT it came with a price. As the doctors continued to mess with my Synthroid dose, I continued to gain weight. I got up to 255lbs and simply couldn't move. I was way too heavy to run and thus too heavy to play football. Being a college student I wasn't about to give up all the beer and pizza so I simply made a pact for myself. Before I ate anything, I drink a big protein drink. This filled me up quite a bit and instead of eating an entire pizza, I'd eat only until I felt full. I never over ate. I never ate until my stomach was rounded and bloated; I simply ate to satisfaction. For many this may seem contrary to habit but all it requires is discipline; if you don't have that, no eating plan can help you.

After about three months, I had shed 30 pounds and got my body back on track. This change made all the difference in the world to me. Here is the simple plan.

1. 50g protein drink mixed with water.
2. Two or more servings of fruits and vegetables.
3. Palm sized portion of protein (this is usually about 4oz).
4. 30-50 grams of clean carbs (rice, potatoes and oatmeal)

If you feel like you don't have the discipline to eat clean all the time, I offer this simple advice. Drink a large protein drink before any meal and snack. If you want to eat some Doritos, slam a protein drink. Before breakfast, protein drink. Before you go out to eat with friends, drink a protein drink. It's so damn simple and easy. Everyone that follows this plan and eats with discretion (i.e. you eat only until you are satisfied) loses weight. The key is to have the discipline to know that you won't finish every meal and you really shouldn't; I've never seen a portion size at a restaurant that deserves to be finished by an overweight person.

More on Diet

Let's just all be honest with ourselves here. If you are over the age of 18, live in the United States and don't know what foods are reasonably healthy and what foods you should probably avoid, your parents have failed you. In fact, I find it very hard to believe that the same people

who can't discriminate what food to put in their mouth are somehow allowed to right to vote for the President of the United States. After the age of 18, you are a responsible adult and thus should take responsibility for your actions. I get asked all the time what kinds of foods to eat, what diet to follow – if you are looking for a specific diet plan via book, I recommend the following books:

1 The Zone Diet by Barry Sears
2 The Paleo Solution by Robb Wolf

Now after you read these books I want you to take a step back, ignore the scare tactics and look at the big picture. They both recommend a balanced diet, quality protein, fruits and vegetables (don't believe that bananas or non-green vegetables are bad for you), some quality carbs and healthy fats. This is no different than any good, basic diet book. All diet books have gimmicks; it is how they appeal to the reader. But any quality plan is about the same. If you read enough books on the subject, things will start to mesh together and make sense. This is called the "13th Warrior Phenomenon". In the movie, *The 13th Warrior*, Antonio Banderas plays an Arab that must fight alongside Norsemen to help a village. Banderas' character does not speak Norse but after weeks of listening in on conversations and watching the Norsemen talk, he slowly begins to understand what they are saying. This is the same with diet and training (and whatever subject you want to be knowledgeable on). You read enough and suddenly things begin to make sense. You just have to read a lot and learn how to read AND think critically. These two things will serve you for life.

Now take these books and apply things you have learned from lifters; from magazines and books. All have high protein diets. Much higher than what is recommended in the Zone book or Paleo books. This is because those books are written for the average person. We are not average people. You can argue this point until you are blue in the face, but the simple truth is that the biggest and strongest people have higher protein diets. There are exceptions but using exceptions to prove the rule prove more your ignorance.

So if you want to follow a diet plan, get on the Zone diet or Paleo diet and triple the protein requirements. Simple as that. Do so with protein powders and whole foods. Eat a ton of protein. Squat heavy. Push heavy objects. Have sex. Love life.

5/3/1 FAQ

Question: Can I use chains or bands while using this program?

Answer: I don't recommend this, but here's the easiest way to figure out how to work chains and bands into the program. First, pick the exercise. This could be benching with bands, squatting with chains, or whatever – there are many different options. Second, estimate what 80-85% of your max would be with that exercise (with the added resistance). Third, warm up to that weight and perform an all-out rep max. Finally, take this weight and these reps and plug them into the rep max formula to find you estimated one rep max:

Weight x Reps x .0333 + Weight = Estimated 1RM

After you get the estimated 1RM, take 90% of that number (1RM * .9) and use this as your new training max.

Question: Why don't you recommend the use of chains and/or bands?

Answer: Accommodating resistances are a good idea on paper, but the practice has been popularized by strong individuals who all use equipment. The popularity of chains and bands has spread throughout the powerlifting world, and lifters have had great success with them. I've seen LOTS of athletes and regular lifters shit the bed with them, though, and this is for one main reason:

The strength curve for athletes/regular guys is heavy at the bottom and light at the top, so they need more low end work. The strength curve for geared lifters is light at the bottom and heavy at the top, so more high end work is needed.

Using chains/bands on a raw lifter will lower the use of bar weight and THUS lower the amount of weight that's used at the bottom of a lift. Hence, the strength curve is all screwed up and not always suited for a raw lifter.

Question: Do I need to deload if I'm a beginner?

Answer: You don't need to deload no matter who you are, but I highly recommend using a deload every fourth week, because it allows your body and mind to rest. You're not going to get weaker. If you do, it's all in your mind.

Question: Can I perform the bench and military press in the same day?

Answer: You *could* do this, but I would highly recommend basing your military max on what you can do AFTER you bench, and not when you're fresh.

Question: Can I squat and deadlift on the same day?

Answer: Yes. Again, pick which lift you'd like to do first, and make sure you base your second exercise on what you can do AFTER you perform the first. If you don't know which one to perform, simply ask yourself which lift you want to improve the most. If you have an equal desire for improvement in both lifts, then find the time to give it an extra day.

Question: If I max out on one lift, but the other three lifts are still improving, do I cut back all lifts 10% and start over? Or do I just cut back one?

Answer: Just cut back one and keep the others moving forward.

Question: Do I go for max reps on each set or just the last set?

Answer: Just the last set of the day for the big exercise.

Question: Do I go for max reps during my deload week?

Answer: No. Limit these reps to 5, and deload!

Question: How much time do you rest between sets?

Answer: You should rest for as long as it takes to perform the set with good form, but not enough to get cold. For most lifters, this is about 3-5 minutes.

Question: Do you ever take your assistance work to failure?

Answer: Very rarely. The key to assistance work is doing enough to stimulate the muscle. Your assistance work should not affect your recovery and overall performance.

Question: How long should you stick with assistance exercises?

Answer: You can switch ever week if you'd like but I would recommend using the same assistance work for at least 4 weeks before switching.

Question: Do you always stick with an assistance template or do you vary it?

Answer: I vary it all the time. The most important thing is to get the work of the main lifts in.

Question: How much time do you take between sets of assistance work?

Answer: Anywhere from 30 seconds to 3 minutes. If a set is worth doing, it's worth doing correctly. I'd rather do one good set than five bad ones with terrible form.

Question: Do you always take the last set to absolute failure?

Answer: No. Sometimes it's best to do the required reps and move on, but rarely is a set done to absolute failure. In most cases, the set should be done *close* to failure, but with perhaps a rep or half of a rep left before failing. This is something you'll have to learn for yourself.

Question: Do you ever take a true one rep max?

Answer: You can do it whenever you want, but I'd recommend waiting at least 3 or 4 cycles to test it again. Never give up a training day to take a 1RM. Simply do the workout first, but don't go for max reps on the last set. From there, try for a new max. While this program will improve your one rep max, the program's success is not geared just toward one rep maxes. Structuring your training like this would be setting you up for failure. A one rep max is no better or worse than a five rep max.

Question: I want to do curls. What day can I use for this?

Answer: Whichever day you want. It doesn't matter.

Question: Can I use front squats instead of back squats for my big exercise?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Do you recommend decline presses as a main or assistance movement?

Answer: No.

Question: Can I use power cleans (or something similar) in this program? If so, where would you put them?

Answer: Yes, this is a great idea. I'd recommend doing power cleans, hang cleans, power snatches or hang snatches if want to choose an Olympic movement. If you want to do these along with the regular training, I'd recommend doing them before you perform your squat or deadlift workout.

Question: Can I use the trap bar instead of the barbell for deadlifting?

Answer: Yes, this is the only acceptable deadlift option.

Question: Can I use the push press or jerk in place of the military press?

Answer: Yes.

Question: If I switch from deadlifts to trap bar deadlifts, how long should I stick with the trap bar?

Answer: You should stick with the new exercise until you reach your goal or until you stall. You must stay with the new exercise for more than just 4-8 weeks.

Question: Can I switch movements every other cycle? For example, do a trap bar deadlift for a cycle and then switch to a deadlift and then back to the trap bar.

Answer: No. Stick with one exercise and keep pushing this exercise until you stall out or reach your personal goals.

Question: I recently hit a max deadlift of 500 pounds. Do I base my training weights around this number (500)?

Answer: No. I recommend starting with10% less (90% of your actual max) than your actual max and working up slowly.

Question: Do you think it's better to be consistent and incremental with 5 pound advancements for all four lifts? Or do you think the 10 pound advancements on the squat and pull are better than 5 pounds for most lifters?

Answer: The smaller the jumps you can make, the better you'll be in the long run. Unfortunately, this requires an ego check, which isn't easy. Trust in the "small jump" system and reap the benefits long term. You can even make 2.5 pound jumps if you'd like. Remember to always think long term.

Question: Do you wear any equipment for your training?

Answer: I always wear a belt. For squats, I wear knee sleeves that help keep my knees warm. They don't add much (if anything) to the lift, but they do a great job of keeping my IT bands and knees warm. For bench press and military press, I wear wrist wraps (and a belt).

Question: Can I use straps for deadlifting?

Answer: While I understand the use of straps – and used them often when I was younger – I've come to the conclusion that, barring some sort of injury, you shouldn't use them.

I say this because:

1. Your grip will quickly catch up to your hip/leg/back strength.
2. Grip strength is essential in all sports, and in life.
3. For overall muscle growth, it's best to train without the aid/support of equipment.
4. It's also best to use as few "crutches" as possible when you train.

Take it from someone who's learned the hard way: ditch the straps as soon as you can and train minimally for maximum results. Get stronger all over. You'll thank me.

Question: What kind of diet should I follow during training?

Answer: I'm probably the last guy you should ask about dieting, but since I've been asked this a million times, here are my general recommendations:

1. Eat all whole foods. Try to avoid protein powders unless absolutely necessary.
2. Eat 4-6 meals per day. Each meal should have some kind of protein source, some kind of fruit or vegetable, and some kind of carbohydrate.
3. Try to get 1 gram of protein per pound of bodyweight per day through whole foods. If you're over 15% body fat, use your lean body mass instead of your bodyweight.
4. Don't go crazy counting calories, grams of protein, etc. Just eat and learn how to approximate your portions.
5. If you want to gain weight, the simplest way is to drink a gallon of milk a day. Simple and effective.

Question: Do you think the 5/3/1 method can be done instead of dynamic days – in harmony with max effort training – without my CNS going down the toilet?

Answer: I think this would burn you out, and I wouldn't recommend it.

Question: During the deload week, do I deload the assistance work too?

Answer: If you're deloading, DELOAD! Cut back on everything and let your body rest and recover.

Question: Can you use this program while using powerlifting gear?

Answer: I've been asked many times how I'd modify this program for training with powerlifting gear. I'm sure there's a way to do this, but I no longer have the patience or the desire to try to figure this out. I don't train in gear, and I don't really work with anyone who does, so it's best to leave this to someone who actually trains with gear. I'm not interested in using bench shirts or squat suits when I train. There are too many variables and inconsistencies when training with gear to put them into a simple training program.

My best advice to you would be this: if you want to bench press 600 pounds with a shirt, train for a 590 pound raw bench. I'm pretty sure you'll be able to get 10 pounds out of your shirt.

Question: When I begin the program, do I start with my true max on each lift?

Answer: No. You begin with 90% of your actual max. If you have a 300 pound bench press, you begin the first 4-week training cycle with a 270lb "max". All your percentages for your first four weeks are based on 270 pounds.

Question: How do I know how to increase the weight after each 4-week training cycle?

Answer: After each training cycle, increase your bench press and military press NO MORE than 5 pounds. You should increase your squat and deadlift NO MORE than 10 pounds. In the above example of the 300 pound bench presser, his "max" would start at 270 and increase to 275 for the second 4-week phase. Every four weeks he would move up 5 pounds.

Question: Is this program for advanced or beginner lifters?

Answer: I've used this program with both beginning and advanced lifters. Steady, slow progression will never go out of fashion, and neither will the big exercises. The trick is to teach beginners correct form at the start. For advanced lifters, the most important thing is to remember long term goals, and not basing unrealistic maxes on what you did four years ago.

Question: If a person wanted to get big and strong, what would you recommend?

Answer: I would recommend the 5/3/1 program, with the Boring But Big assistance work. Then have that person drink a gallon of milk a day. Three things that are very easy and simple to do.

Figure 73.

MONKEY STEALS THE PEACH

This is the classical name for the upward groin slap. Drop to the right knee, swinging the arms like windmills to distract the enemy and deflect any defense he may offer. The left arm ends in *jodan*, the rising forearm block, protecting the head as you drop low and slide forward without stepping. The right arm swings up and back, circling from the shoulder. Turn the palm up as it swings between the enemy's feet to stun him (Figure 73).

Question: What if that person is lactose intolerant?

Answer: Buy baby wipes. It's gonna get dirty.

Question: Why do you do so many chins and dips? Is this part of the program?

Answer: No it's not part of the program. I do chins and dips because they are the most efficient upper body assistance exercises.

Question: Can I use kettlebells as part of my assistance work?

Answer: Yes. This is a great idea.

Question: I don't know how many sets and reps to do on my assistance work.

Answer: When in doubt, do 5 sets of 10 reps.

Question: Can you do board presses with this program?

Answer: Yes, it would work. I would not recommend them if you are a raw lifter.

Question: What are the five best exercises to increase my deadlift?

Answer: Squats, deadlifts for reps, some kind of abdominal training (sit ups or leg raises), good mornings and Kroc rows (high rep dumbbell rows).

Question: What are the five best exercises to increase my squat?

Answer: Squats, good mornings, some kind of ab work (see above), lunges and leg presses.

Question: What are the five best exercises to increase my bench press?

Answer: Bench press, military press, dips, chins and dumbbell rows.

Question: What are the six best exercises to increase my military press?

Answer: Military press, bench press, dips, chins, hanging leg raises and back raises.

Question: What is more important for getting stronger; assistance work or the four big lifts?

Answer: The four big lifts. Done with correct form and a well thought out plan, this will trump ANY weak point exercise or assistance work.

Question: What are five ways to increase my press?

Answer: Ever since I started pressing, I have been obsessed with making it better. Partly because I was so weak at it for so long (which meant that it had no place to go but up) and because it is simply a cool exercise to do. The death of the Press as a movement can be attributed to a lot of things, none of which actually matter. BUT, if you view this lift with as much enthusiasm as I do, use these tips to improve what I consider to be one of the most fun movements in the gym.

1. Use a false grip – I don't know who told me this or why I began doing this but this made a huge difference with my pressing power and more importantly THE PATH of the bar. It may seem a bit scary at first; holding a bar over your head with a false grip. But this seems to keep the bar path perfect for me and for some reason, make it much more comfortable on my shoulders.

2. Hold the bar in the shelf of your lats – This is hard to explain but think about it this way; don't support the bar in your hands or on your shoulders. "Shoulder" the load with your lats – keep your lats pinched and held tight. This will keep the bar path from getting out in front of you and make you feel stronger at the bottom. A good confidant start makes a huge difference.

3. View it as a total body lift – This doesn't mean that you should turn it into a push press, something that I have caught myself doing from time to time. But because of the line of power goes from over your head to the ground, it requires your whole body to be tight. Squeeze your ass hard! "Squat" the weight up with violence. The press is NOT a shoulder exercise, it is a MOVEMENT. View it as such.

4. Use volume to get stronger – the first thing I did to increase my press is train to a heavy set and then back off for multiple sets of 10. This is very similar to the very popular Boring But Big. I have found that volume increases my press greatly – but do not forget that you have to train heavy, too. As a note – when doing my main sets of 5/3/1, my goal is to simply get the weight overhead; it is a MOVEMENT. When doing down sets, I pull my head through at the top and view it as a "muscle", not a movement. This is a key distinction that one must have when training big lifts (squat, bench, clean, dead, press) and when doing assistance work. One is a movement, the other is a muscle.

5. Make it a priority – Just like any lift, if you want it to increase you have to make it a priority in your training. Once I did this, once I made it as important as my squat or bench press, it made huge increases. But please understand that of any of these lifts (squat, clean, bench or deadlift) this is the one that will increase the slowest and take the most patience. Keep at it and you will be rewarded. There is nothing better than pressing a weight that some people struggle to squat.

5/3/1 Comments and Success Stories

Jesse Rosenberger

"I've seen many questions lately about when and how often to test your 1RM when doing 5/3/1, and I'd guess you're growing weary of answering them. Since we agree on a method for determining rep maxes (**Weight lifted (lbs) x reps x .0333 + weight lifted = Max),** I'd suggest this to everyone who's caught up with testing 1RM with this program. It's not 100% accurate, but neither is testing on any arbitrary day, especially if you've just done your workout. If you do 200x5 on a lift, and then you do 205x6 the following month, can't you tell you're getting stronger?"

Devan Washington

This isn't his real last name, but I pretend that it is. I think Devan is 19 years old, and he's been lifting since he started high school. He began training at the Compound recently. In about four months his lifts made the following progression:

Squat: 350x1 to 375x8
Bench: 275x5 to 350x1
Deadlift: 385x1 to 405x6
Military: 135x10 to 155x12

From Javier

”I’d like to report my progress on the 5/3/1 routine. I’ve been stuck at the same weights for the last couple of years, and I’ve tried every type of program out there, with very little success. Weights, however, have started to move again since I began using 5/3/1. My progress so far:”

September 15, 2008 – January 21, 2008

Squat: 410 to 440
Bench: 310 to 340
Military: 165 to 200

From Jesse

August to January:

Military: 160x3 to 190x11
Parallel Box Squat: 425x1 to 395x8
Bench: 365x1 to 340x5
Deadlift: 520x1 to 430x11

”*Observations:*

1. Like you’ve said a million times, start light. I did this with military and squat and had better success than I did with the bench and deadlift.
2. Three times a week is better than four, at least for me, since I’m 36.

3. Too much assistance work is stupid.
4. Go hard on the last set every week except when deloading.
5. Deload means deload. Recover!
6. Stretching afterward is a good thing.

This is basically what I've done, and I've had success with it. My reps on the final sets have all been PR's every week. After six months, I'm still getting 8-13 reps on squats and military on my last sets, and 5-10 with bench and deadlift. I've hit weights for reps that I haven't done recently, which has helped me mentally by always showing me I'm making good progress. I've never had a bad day. This approach may be slower, but it's been very consistent for me. "

From Luke

"I started 5/3/1 back in July/August with my lowball maxes as follows:

Squat and Deadlift: 460
Bench: 270
Military: 160

So far this week I've benched 245x11 and squatted 440x10. According to a 1RM calculator I found online, my bench max is around 330 now, and my squat max is 587."

From Jeremy

"Hey Jim,

Just wanted to give you another success story. I started your program five months ago because I figured it looked like a good way to get back to squatting full time after having ACL surgery. I lost quite a bit of strength, but rehabbed my way back to a solid 315 pound parallel box squat (down from 475) with little to no pain.

I based my numbers off a 285 training max, and went to work. I kept my accessory work the same each workout, with cambered bar good mornings, leg curls and pulldown abs. After

several cycles, I'm excited to tell you I just hit 315 for 10 reps. I didn't want to see what my 1RM was, mainly because I didn't care. I just wanted to see what 315 felt like, and the reps just kept coming. I couldn't be happier with my progress. This program rocks!

I also dropped 25 pounds over the five months just by adding the Prowler and eating a little better. It's absolutely amazing."

From Charis

"Jim,

Here's another success story to add to your stash. I'm a beginner who's been training properly since June, and on and off before that since January.

Let's call this three cycles of 5/3/1 – September until December:

Bench: 154 to 200

Squat: 242 to 275

Deadlift: 300 to 375*

Military Press: 122 to 154

*I pulled 165kg in a deadlift-only meet ten days ago.

The programming is based off my 95% singles that I lifted in my last cycle's last week of lifts. Some of these may not have started accurately with 100% of my max in September – my military press, for example, might have had another 10 pounds – but like you said, I started below my maximum. The extra reps on the last set are what does the trick. It's heavy enough for you to make gains, but not heavy enough to make you fail like a 100% single would.

I weigh about 153 pounds, and I'm 20 years old. I box, so I don't want to gain weight, but I've lost some weight during this period, leaned out, and gotten bigger as well.

Thanks!"

From Christopher Sean

”Three months of 5/3/1:

Bench: 185x7 to 225x5

Squat: 285x5 to 340x3

Deadlift: 360x2 to 420x2

Military: 180x1 to 225x4

This is an excellent program, and it’s very easy to use with both busy and non-hectic schedules. Well done, sir!”

Darren Mallette

”Hey Jim,

I actually just posted something on my blog the other day about my experience with 5/3/1:

The lifts below are from the third week of the cycle, and they’re the max lift for that date. This covers a period from September 1 to December 1:

Military Press: 2x185 to 3x210

Deadlift: 2x455 to 3x500

Squat (14” box): 3x350 to 3x400

Bench Press: 3x300 to 2x330

It’s working!”

Patrick Hackley-Hough

Military Press: 155x4 to 185x5

Bench: 255x3 to 275x9

Squat: 450x3 to 495x5

Deadlift: 405x5 to 440x6

Note from Jim: I'm not sure about the timeline for Patrick, but I'm assuming this was accomplished in 3-4 months of training. I've spoken to him on the phone, and one of the major things he emphasized to me was that he really busted his ass on his last sets. He also used his assistance work to raise/lower volume, and said that lowering the maxes 10% was key. Additionally, he pointed out how the training was structured such that it allowed him to really focus on pushing himself on the last set.

Leigh An Jaskiewicz

Leigh An started out with a SHIRTED bench of 170x1. After 5/3/1, she posted the following:

Raw Bench: 135x1 to 185x2 and 135x20

Deadlift: 315x3 to 315x9 and 270x18

Note from Jim: I just want to emphasize that her raw bench here is a 5 pound RAW PR over her old SHIRTED max. This happened over the course of 15 months. She also posted her first elite total (in gear) with a 430 squat, 275 bench and a 425 deadlift. During her training for this, she used the 5/3/1 program and rarely wore her gear – lifting twice in her bench shirt and never in her squat suit.

From Jim O'Brien

”Hey Wendler,

One more success story of sorts for you. I've been playing with your 5/3/1 routine off and on for a while now. I decided to really focus on it and stick with it this time, and I've just finished my first four week cycle. I measured myself for a new bench shirt the other day, and my shoulders increased by 1”. My arms and chest also increased by a half-inch over what they measured the last time I bought a shirt. My bodyweight has gone down 5 pounds, and all the shoulder and elbow aches and pains I had before are gone!

I can't wait to work through several more cycles.”

Tyler O'Banion

“I started the 5/3/1 program in late July 2008 and ran it for 16 straight weeks before I tested all my lifts again. I tested in December 2008 to help me set up my training for 2009. I will continue using 5/3/1 for many years to come.

Here is a list of my progress since using 5/3/1. Time Lapse: 16 Weeks

Military Press:
Previous Best: 135x1, 105x5
After 5/3/1: 165x1: (30lb PR)
Rep Records Set: 135x10, 145x6

Hook-Grip Deadlift:
Previous Best: 455x1, 405x3
After 5/3/1: 530x1 (75lbs PR)
Rep Records Set: 380x12, 385x10, 405x12, 430x7, 500x3

Bench Press:
Previous Best: 300x1, 245x6
After 5/3/1: 315x1 (15lb PR) - bodyweight was 11 pounds lighter
Rep Records Set: 250x8, 255x8, 275x4

Squat:

Previous Best: 350x1, 300x2

After 5/3/1: 375x1 (25lbs PR)-Conservative

Rep Records Set: 285x12, 295x12, 300x8, 315x8

The keys to progress were setting attainable goals for myself (which I subsequently destroyed), staying consistent, being very patient, and believing in the program and myself. Before I even started using 5/3/1, I somehow knew that I would make progress on it. Numbers don't lie. “

From Ron

I just did a strongman competition a week after completing my fourth phase of 5/3/1. On my first phase, I set my overhead press max at 240 pounds. In my competition, there was a 240 pound axle clean/press for reps. I got 11, and just missed locking out 12. I was hoping to get to 300 pounds by the end of the year, but I may get there even more quickly than that. If you’re wondering whether 5/3/1 works for strongman training, it does. I’m building not only strength, but lifting endurance as well. I’ve been using the Boring But Big template. Thanks!

From Lee

Jim,

After my training today, I thought I had to tell you how much I love your 5/3/1 program. I’ve been running it for four months now, and I’ve made a lot of progress in all four lifts:

Box Squat: 335x1 to 320x8

Deadlift: 315x6 to 315x10

Bench: 185x4 to 185x7 and 175x3 to 175x6

Military Press: 145x1 to 135x6 and 125x6 to 125x9

As you’ve said before, the keys are taking 10% off your lifts, never going to failure, and setting goals for each day. Thanks so much for this program.

Training Rules of Being Awesome

1. I will strength train 2-4 days/week
2. I will commit myself to increasing my strength in the basic lifts (squat, press, bench press, deadlift and power clean) as I believe that these lifts have a great carryover to all areas.
3. I will condition like a man 2-4 days/week; a Prowler, hills, weighted vest, sprints or stadium steps will always trump hamster-cages like treadmills and ellipticals.
4. I will stretch hard.
5. I will keep strength training in the weight room and conditioning on the track. I don't take a barbell to a marathon so keep your mouth breathing out of my squat rack.
6. I don't need fly-by-night gadgets to get strong; a barbell, rack/squat stands, platform and a bench press is all I need.
7. I will strive to have a great workout on the main lift – and a good workout on my assistance. I recognize which lifts really matter and which are done for support.
8. I don't get side tracked by the latest and greatest training program or an article or a post on a forum. Programs may change but principles remain forever.
9. I strive to eat well; beef, eggs, chicken, fish, milk, protein powders, fruits and vegetables make the bulk of my diet. I will eat protein. And then eat some more.
10. I recognize the importance of patience in the quest for strength. This is a lifelong pursuit which will serve me in all areas of my life.

Follow these ten rules when you feel like you are getting off track – when you feel overwhelmed, when you feel you are losing your Training Way. When you feel tempted to judge yourself by the way you look rather than what you do; that is the way of the contemporary Male. A sad state of "looks before performance" is plaguing the world. If you think looks trump performance, ask the last girl you slept with. Skinny jeans, androgynous bodies and limp character populate Our World. I ask you, "What would Conan do?"

Conan wouldn't stand by and let others determine his attitude. He wouldn't mope around like a sad, pathetic dog when things don't go his way. And he sure as hell doesn't tuck tail when defeated. Stand up and show the world who you are and what you can do.

Bleed success. Eat. Sleep. Mate. Defend. – Jim Wendler

WEIGHT	60%	65%	70%	75%	80%	85%	90%	95%
105	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
110	65	70	75	85	90	95	100	105
115	70	75	80	85	90	100	105	110
120	70	80	85	90	95	100	110	115
125	75	80	90	95	100	105	115	120
130	80	85	90	100	105	110	115	125
135	80	90	95	100	110	115	120	130
140	85	90	100	105	110	120	125	135
145	85	95	100	110	115	125	130	140
150	90	100	105	115	120	130	135	145
155	95	100	110	115	125	130	140	145
160	95	105	110	120	130	135	145	150
165	100	105	115	125	130	140	150	155
170	100	110	120	130	135	145	155	160
175	105	115	125	130	140	150	160	165
180	110	115	125	135	145	155	160	170
185	110	120	130	140	150	155	165	175
190	115	125	135	145	150	160	170	180
195	115	125	135	145	155	165	175	185
200	120	130	140	150	160	170	180	190
205	125	135	145	155	165	175	185	195
210	125	135	145	160	170	180	190	200
215	130	140	150	160	170	185	195	205
220	130	145	155	165	175	185	200	210
225	135	145	160	170	180	190	205	215
230	140	150	160	175	185	195	205	220
235	140	155	165	175	190	200	210	225
240	145	155	170	180	190	205	215	230
245	145	160	170	185	195	210	220	235
250	150	165	175	190	200	215	225	240
255	155	165	180	190	205	215	230	240
260	155	170	180	195	210	220	235	245
265	160	170	185	200	210	225	240	250
270	160	175	190	205	215	230	245	255
275	165	180	195	205	220	235	250	260
280	170	180	195	210	225	240	250	265
285	170	185	200	215	230	240	255	270
290	175	190	205	220	230	245	260	275
295	175	190	205	220	235	250	265	280
300	180	195	210	225	240	255	270	285

WEIGHT	60%	65%	70%	75%	80%	85%	90%	95%
305	185	200	215	230	245	260	275	290
310	185	200	215	235	250	265	280	295
315	190	205	220	235	250	270	285	300
320	190	210	225	240	255	270	290	305
325	195	210	225	245	260	275	295	310
330	200	215	230	250	265	280	295	315
335	200	220	235	250	270	285	300	320
340	205	220	240	255	270	290	305	325
345	205	225	240	260	275	295	310	330
350	210	230	245	265	280	300	315	335
355	215	230	250	265	285	300	320	335
360	215	235	250	270	290	305	325	340
365	220	235	255	275	290	310	330	345
370	220	240	260	280	295	315	335	350
375	225	245	265	280	300	320	340	355
380	230	245	265	285	305	325	340	360
385	230	250	270	290	310	325	345	365
390	235	255	275	295	310	330	350	370
395	235	255	275	295	315	335	355	375
400	240	260	280	300	320	340	360	380
405	245	265	285	305	325	345	365	385
410	245	265	285	310	330	350	370	390
415	250	270	290	310	330	355	375	395
420	250	275	295	315	335	355	380	400
425	255	275	300	320	340	360	385	405
430	260	280	300	325	345	365	385	410
435	260	285	305	325	350	370	390	415
440	265	285	310	330	350	375	395	420
445	265	290	310	335	355	380	400	425
450	270	295	315	340	360	385	405	430
455	275	295	320	340	365	385	410	430
460	275	300	320	345	370	390	415	435
465	280	300	325	350	370	395	420	440
470	280	305	330	355	375	400	425	445
475	285	310	335	355	380	405	430	450
480	290	310	335	360	385	410	430	455
485	290	315	340	365	390	410	435	460
490	295	320	345	370	390	415	440	465
495	295	320	345	370	395	420	445	470
500	300	325	350	375	400	425	450	475

WEIGHT	60%	65%	70%	75%	80%	85%	90%	95%
505	305	330	355	380	405	430	455	480
510	305	330	355	385	410	435	460	485
515	310	335	360	385	410	440	465	490
520	310	340	365	390	415	440	470	495
525	315	340	370	395	420	445	475	500
530	320	345	370	400	425	450	475	505
535	320	350	375	400	430	455	480	510
540	325	350	380	405	430	460	485	515
545	325	355	380	410	435	465	490	520
550	330	360	385	415	440	470	495	525
555	335	360	390	415	445	470	500	525
560	335	365	390	420	450	475	505	530
565	340	365	395	425	450	480	510	535
570	340	370	400	430	455	485	515	540
575	345	375	405	430	460	490	520	545
580	350	375	405	435	465	495	520	550
585	350	380	410	440	470	495	525	555
590	355	385	415	445	470	500	530	560
595	355	385	415	445	475	505	535	565
600	360	390	420	450	480	510	540	570
605	365	395	425	455	485	515	545	575
610	365	395	425	460	490	520	550	580
615	370	400	430	460	490	525	555	585
620	370	405	435	465	495	525	560	590
625	375	405	440	470	500	530	565	595
630	380	410	440	475	505	535	565	600
635	380	415	445	475	510	540	570	605
640	385	415	450	480	510	545	575	610
645	385	420	450	485	515	550	580	615
650	390	425	455	490	520	555	585	620
655	395	425	460	490	525	555	590	620
660	395	430	460	495	530	560	595	625
665	400	430	465	500	530	565	600	630
670	400	435	470	505	535	570	605	635
675	405	440	470	505	540	575	610	640
680	410	440	475	510	545	580	610	645
685	410	445	480	515	550	580	615	650
690	415	450	485	520	550	585	620	655
695	415	450	485	520	555	590	625	660
700	420	455	490	525	560	595	630	665

Please photocopy the next few pages for your training records.

Week 1 – 5/3/1 **Name**_____

Military Press Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		**Deadlift** Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		**Bench Press** Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		**Squat** Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____	
Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight
65% x 5		65% x 5		65% x 5		65% x 5	
75% x 5		75% x 5		75% x 5		75% x 5	
85% x 5		85% x 5		85% x 5		85% x 5	

Rep Records

Military Press	**Deadlift**	**Bench Press**	**Squat**

Week 2 – 5/3/1 **Name**_____

Military Press		**Deadlift**		**Bench Press**		**Squat**	
Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____	
Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight
70% x 3		70% x 3		70% x 3		70% x 3	
80% x 3		80% x 3		80% x 3		80% x 3	
90% x 3		90% x 3		90% x 3		90% x 3	

Rep Records

Military Press	**Deadlift**	**Bench Press**	**Squat**

Week 3 – 5/3/1 **Name**_____

Military Press		**Deadlift**		**Bench Press**		**Squat**	
Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____	
Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight
75% x 5		75% x 5		75% x 5		75% x 5	
85% x 3		85% x 3		85% x 3		85% x 3	
95% x 1		95% x 1		95% x 1		95% x 1	

Rep Records

Military Press	**Deadlift**	**Bench Press**	**Squat**

Week 4 – 5/3/1 **Name**_____

Military Press Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		**Deadlift** Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		**Bench Press** Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		**Squat** Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____	
Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight
40% x 5		40% x 5		40% x 5		40% x 5	
50% x 5		50% x 5		50% x 5		50% x 5	
60% x 5		60% x 5		60% x 5		60% x 5	

Week 1 – 5/3/1 **Name**_____

Military Press Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		**Deadlift** Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		**Bench Press** Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		**Squat** Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____	
Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight
75% x 5		75% x 5		75% x 5		75% x 5	
80% x 5		80% x 5		80% x 5		80% x 5	
85% x 5		85% x 5		85% x 5		85% x 5	

Rep Records

Military Press	**Deadlift**	**Bench Press**	**Squat**

Week 2 – 5/3/1 **Name**_____

Military Press Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		**Deadlift** Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		**Bench Press** Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		**Squat** Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____	
Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight
80% x 3		80% x 3		80% x 3		80% x 3	
85% x 3		85% x 3		85% x 3		85% x 3	
90% x 3		90% x 3		90% x 3		90% x 3	

Rep Records

Military Press	**Deadlift**	**Bench Press**	**Squat**

Week 3 – 5/3/1 **Name**_____

Military Press		**Deadlift**		**Bench Press**		**Squat**	
Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____	
Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight
75% x 5		75% x 5		75% x 5		75% x 5	
85% x 3		85% x 3		85% x 3		85% x 3	
95% x 1		95% x 1		95% x 1		95% x 1	

Rep Records

Military Press	**Deadlift**	**Bench Press**	**Squat**

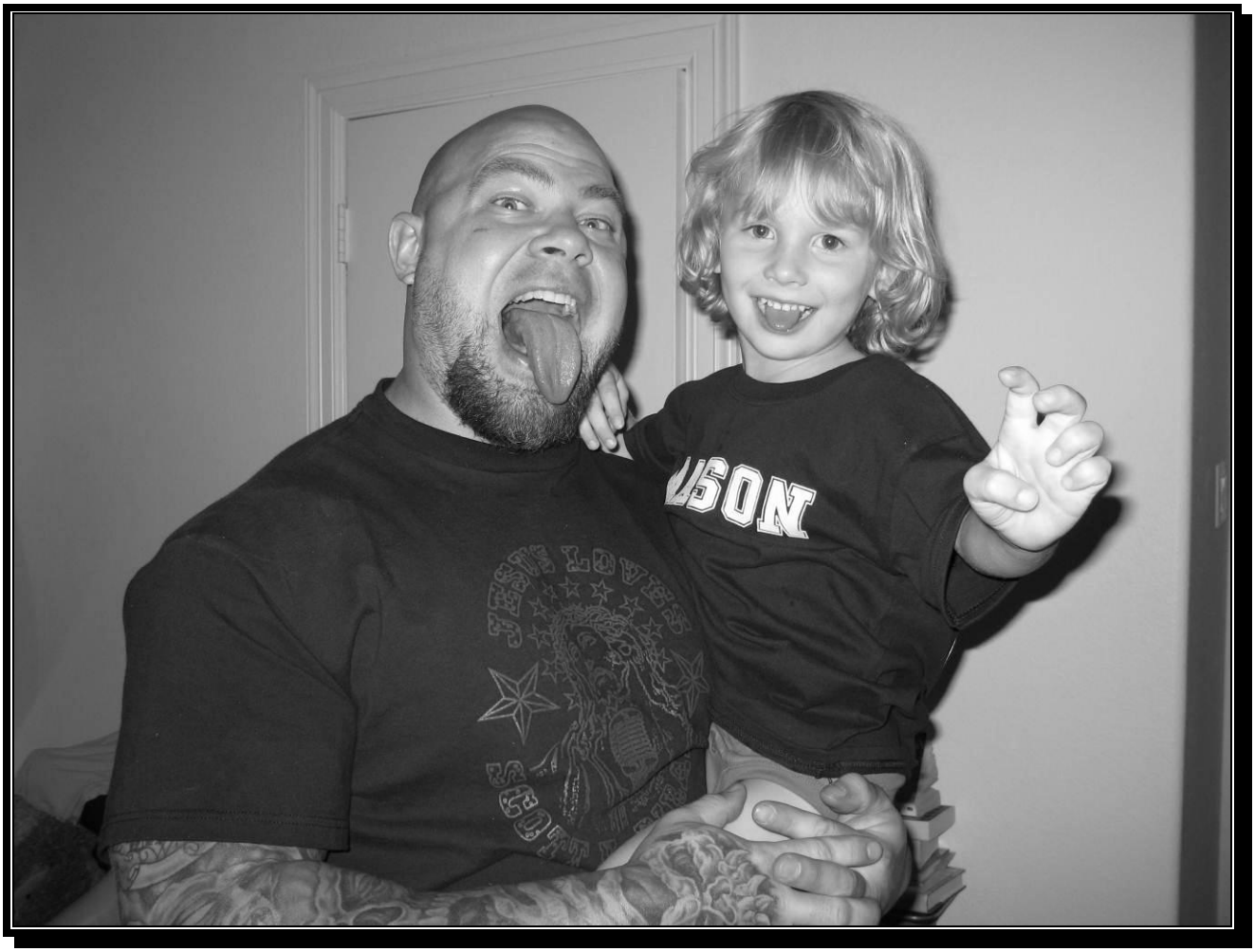
Week 4 – 5/3/1 **Name**_____

Military Press Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		**Deadlift** Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		**Bench Press** Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____		**Squat** Actual Max _____ Training Max _____ Date_____	
Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight	Sets	Weight
40% x 5		40% x 5		40% x 5		40% x 5	
50% x 5		50% x 5		50% x 5		50% x 5	
60% x 5		60% x 5		60% x 5		60% x 5	

		Meal 1	Meal 2	Meal 3	Meal 4	Meal 5	Meal 6
Monday							
Protein							
Carb							
Fat							
Tuesday							
Protein							
Carb							
Fat							
Wednesday							
Protein							
Carb							
Fat							
Thursday							
Protein							
Carb							
Fat							
Friday							
Protein							
Carb							
Fat							
Saturday							
Protein							
Carb							
Fat							
Sunday							
Protein							
Carb							
Fat							

Jim Wendler is the creator and author of *5/3/1: The Simplest and Most Effective Training Method for Raw Strength*. He has also authored *5/3/1 for Powerlifting*, *5/3/1 for Football* as well as hundreds of articles for online training websites and print magazines. He is a graduate of the University of Arizona, earning three letters in football. He is the father of two great boys, Mason and James Bronson.

Jim Wendler lives vicariously through his son's long blonde hair.



Visit JimWendler.com

-Jim Wendler-
About Jim • Store • Blog • Articles • News • Videos • Music • Q&A • Links
follow
Training Log Update - http://t.co/PHF8OSMU
EMAIL JIM
FEATURED CONTENT
October 30th
Training Log Update
Posted in: Articles, Blog
10 Comments
Jim Says...
Don't fall for that crap that people are peddling on the message boards, in magazines or on TV. Get your shit in order, and get your training in order. Start
Training Log Update 10/30/2011

Visit **www.JimWendler.com** for more information

- Original material, articles
- Training updates
- Videos
- Shirts and apparel
- Years of articles and Q/A's
- Links to all books (ebooks/hard copies)
- Ebooks available!
- Hard copies are available on Amazon.

531
You Are
Being
Lied
To